

**Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Quality and its Impact on Students' Performance in  
Secondary Schools in Nepal**



A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

By

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## DECLARATION

Candidate's declaration:

I, Shiva Ram Tiwari, hereby certify that this thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Abertay University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for any other qualification at any other academic institution.

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I certify that this is a true and accurate version of the thesis approved by the examiners, and that all relevant ordinance regulations have been fulfilled.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study has identified teachers' perceptions on the quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal. The objectives of this study are to examine teachers' perceptions of teachers' professionalism, teaching pedagogy, schools' environment and facilities, government policy and practice, parental responsibilities and socio-cultural factors. Hence, the research findings aim to contribute to the work of policymakers, teachers, practitioners and future researchers on improving the quality of teaching.

In order to achieve the main aim of this study, a mixed method approach was adopted. The quantitative method was carried out through the use of a survey questionnaire with secondary school teachers in Nepal. The sample respondents for this study were selected through the convenience sampling method. The data was analysed by using a statistical tool; namely, the Mann-Whitney U-Test, in SPSS. The qualitative data was collected via in-depth interviews conducted with secondary school head teachers. The data has been thematically analysed using computer software (NVIVO). Secondary data has also been gathered from relevant journals, research papers, articles, books and other online sources.

This study finds that teachers' professionalism, pedagogy, government policies, schools' environment and facilities, parental responsibility and socio-economic factors all affect the quality of teaching. In addition, this study also identifies some new findings; namely, the influence of student responsibility and excessive political influence on secondary schools in Nepal. However, the study identifies no influence of socio-cultural factors on teaching and learning activities. The findings of this study are significant for academics, teachers, practitioners and policymakers. In addition, system theory has been empirically tested in the context of Nepal, which adds to existing knowledge, especially in terms of the relevance of social system theory in the education systems of developing countries like Nepal. Further research could be carried out on male and female teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching in either public or private schools.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BEEP	Basic Essential Education Programme
BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Programme
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CERID	Centre for Education Research, Innovation and Development
CLC	Community Learning Centre
COE	Controller of Examinations
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DEC	District Education Committee
DFA	Dakar Framework for Action
DFID	Department for International Development
DOE	Department of Education
DRRR	Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery
ECEP	Childhood Education Programme
EFA	Education for All
EPF	Education Production Function

ETC	Educational Training Centres
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
JFA	Joint Financing Arrangement
JICA	Japan International Co-operation Agency
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NEC	National Education Commission
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
PMPV	Percentages Mean Point Value
PPE	Pre-Primary Education
PTTC	Primary Teacher Training Centre
RED	Regional Educationalists Directorate
RP	Resource Persons

SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	Science, Mathematics and Technology
SEP	Secondary Education Project
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
STRO	School Teachers Record Office
TFA	Teach for America
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TU	Tribhuvan University
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The primary concern of this research study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the different factors that are likely to affect the quality of teaching and student performance in secondary schools in Nepal. Secondary schools in Nepal are mainly governed by the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB), which also supervises private secondary schools. Recently, various systematic investigations, such as collecting records and reports of activities, performance and the teaching and learning process in educational institutions, have been carried out to identify the issues present in the education system of Nepal. However, the research into teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching and its on students' academic performance is still immature.

This study identifies teachers' perceptions of different variables regarding the factors affecting teaching quality, teachers' qualifications and development, and seeks to discover the relationship between them and their impact on students' performance. Therefore, this study is significant as it identifies possible issues and formulates necessary strategies based upon the findings. The researcher having the potential to influence how policy makers, teachers and practitioners approach curriculum activities that could present opportunities to enhance learning.

#### 1.1 Background

The nature of what constitutes 'quality' in school education is the subject of on-going debate in both developed as well as developing countries (Perraton, 2012). There are several factors that can be different in developed and developing countries when it comes to determining the quality of education, whereas ensuring education quality is a continuous process (Kasem & Pathak, 2015). There are several common methods practiced to improve the quality of education, such as the adoption and implementation of curriculum content and processes that are learner-centred. Other methods that are commonly used are the identification of the diversity of learning requirements as well as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for self-learning and problem-solving (Leu & Price-Rom, 2006). However, the enhancement of the quality of education is a challenge to economic and social development and therefore it has become a major national issue to be addressed by government directives (DFA, 2000). One of the common trends in enhancing the quality of education is the focus on the development of

cognitive skills, which is an area in which teachers can be one of the main contributors to the improvement of quality (Sabirova, 2014). UNESCO (2004) and USAID (2011) both highlight the fact that when schools are supported by an early learning and skill enhancement program, this can bring benefits to the education system that include both individuals and the community. To improve the quality of education there also needs to be access to applicable learning resources (Dagnev & Asrat, 2016). There is a need for assessment strategies at all grades or levels that must reflect such changes with an emphasis on learning and which must consist of varied, regular and responsive assessment and feedback strategies (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). These strategies will not be effective and successful on their own unless due attention is paid to enhancing teachers' skills development.

In the context of Nepal, the government is committed to ensuring the quality of education by developing and implementing different education policies. In this regard, the government has been paying attention to teachers' professional development, pedagogy, resources and infrastructures in order to improve students' academic performance. However, such efforts are still insufficient in various areas of school education and this can have a detrimental impact on the quality of education (Carney, 2003).

## **1.2 History of education development in Nepal**

Formal education in Nepal began in 1853 with the aim of imparting education only to the children of upper-class people and those who were in power, such as the royal family, government officials and the rich (Thapa, 2011). At that time, the general public was excluded from this elite education system. The school system was opened to everyone when the country became a democracy in 1951. According to Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics, the adult literacy rate in 1951/52 was just 5% of the total population. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of students enrolled in country's 300 schools and two colleges at that time was 10,000 (CBS-Nepal, 2003). If this is compared to the present time context, the literacy rate of Nepal is 65.9% according to the National Census 2011 (MOE, 2013), which is a good sign of an increase in the educational level. The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) came into force in 1971 and it was guided and funded by the USAID. It helped the education department to empower district education officers to run schools. Later, the Nepal Education Act was brought into law by the Nepal government (Thapa, 2011). Today, the education system in Nepal is mainly guided by this Act, which encourages the expansion of education services across the country.

After the restoration of multiparty democracy in Nepal, the government of Nepal focused on improving education facilities in order to encourage every child to gain a school education. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in primary education increased exponentially. In 1980, just 16% of all children were enrolled in primary schools, but the figure had increased to 83.5% in 2003. However, the quality of education in public schools was not effectively monitored. The government developed and implemented liberal policies in the private sector in order to open new schools and colleges. Many well-off families were keen to send their children to private schools. Consequently, the number of private schools increased. Since then, the quality of public schools has further deteriorated (Thapa, 2013). Today, private sector schools have a stronghold in providing education to Nepalese children (Carney & Bista, 2009).

Comparatively speaking, Nepal's education system is still in a modernising stage. Government policies, combined with a systematic and scientific plan, have helped to improve the education system. In the last two decades, there have been many efforts made by both the government and non-government sectors to improve the quality of education. Many international non-government organisations (INGOs) have been involved in improving students' performance in Nepalese schools. The majority of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Nepal have successfully imported a United States (US) based education system, since they have received funding from them (MOE, 2009). However, challenges are also mounting. Kernot (2003) asserts that participating in the educational development of Nepal is challenging and that more help is needed from a wider range of resources, as there is a disproportionate amount of aid being received from donors. Formal education is considered to be one of the best ways to reduce illiteracy, thereby opening up opportunities for the nation's development.

### **1.3 Education system in Nepal**

#### **1.3.1 Types of school**

Nepal's education providers (i.e., the education system) can be separated into two key classifications: public and private schools. However, public schools are also called community schools, which are further categorised into public assisted schools, public managed schools and public independent schools. Public assisted schools are completely maintained by the government in terms of instructors' pay and additional costs. They receive regular grants from the government to cover the salaries of all staff members and the schools' daily administrative costs. Furthermore, the government also provides textbooks and scholarships for poor students.

Teachers and other staff members receive insurance, medical allowances and pensions (MOE, 2015).

Public schools are also funded and supported by the government, but the responsibility for day-to-day management lies with local communities. Community unaided schools are another type of public school. These may or may not be partially funded by the government, but are managed by the local community. Private schools are also called institutional schools and these are fully funded and managed by the private sector. The government does not provide any grants to private (i.e., institutional) schools. In addition, some religious schools are also run in Nepal, i.e., Madrasa, Ashram/Gurukul, Gumba/Vihar. The government also provides these schools with full financial support (MOE, 2015). These schools have their own kind of importance within the community and have made a significant contribution to education in Nepal.

### **1.3.2 Levels of the school education system**

The Nepalese school education system comprises primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary education (Pangeni, 2014). A student can get a school-leaving certificate only after completing grade ten. The student must attend primary level (grade 1-grade 5), lower secondary level (grade 6-grade 8) and secondary level (grade 9-grade 10) successfully in order to do so (MOE, 2010). The government of Nepal launched the School Sector Reform in 2009, which outlines the factors involved in the categorisation of grades 1-8 (primary education) and grades 9-12 (secondary level), and in which educational governance, such as accountability, responsibility, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, are highlighted (UNESCO, 2010). The reason for this was to develop a specific focus on each category. The purpose of the division of the education system into primary education was to make sure that there was equal access to an excellent education via a rights-based line of attack, along with the enhancement of a child friendly school environment. The goal of secondary education was to fulfil the development needs of the country by creating a skilled workforce through education and building a foundation for tertiary education. By doing this, the government of Nepal has improved the education system to some extent and students can now gain a quality education, in comparison to previous years. This is because the government now has the opportunity to focus on the improvement of primary and secondary level education separately. Higher education starts with a bachelor's degree, which can be started after 12 years of school education. The duration of a bachelor's degree course is three years, while a bachelor's degree in technical areas is four years. It is followed by a master's degree, which takes two years to

complete. Doctoral study, or a PhD degree, can start once a student has finished their master's (MOE, 2015).

Figure 1. 1: *Structure of the education system in Nepal*

Year	Class		Education Level
16 plus years		Higher Education	PhD (3-7 years)
			M.Phil. (2 years)
			Master's Degree (2-3 years)
			Bachelor's Degree (3-5 years)
16	12	Secondary Education	Technical Diploma
15	11		
14	10		
13	9		SLC / Technical SLC
12	8		
11	7	Basic Education	Basic Education (Primary) (8 years)
10	6		
9	5		
8	4		
7	3		
6	2		
5	1		
3-4	ECD	Pre-School Education	Early Child Development (ECD)

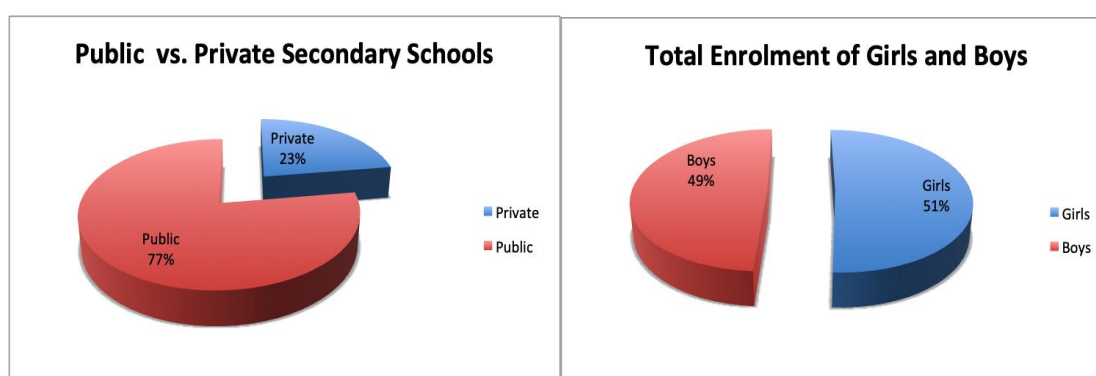
Source: MOE (2015)

The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) provides practical as well as professional training for those who could not attain the level needed to proceed with higher education or university, but who are interested in technical training. The CTEVT offers a technical diploma course, which is designed to be equivalent to higher secondary education and which takes three years to complete (DOE, 2014). Also, the government has introduced a

one-year bridge course after grade 9, which allows students to complete tertiary education based on vocational training.

Currently, there are 34,782 registered schools providing formal education in Nepal. Of these, more than 30,000 schools offer both primary and secondary level education. Amongst them, 29,272 are known as community schools and 5,510 are institutional schools (DOE, 2013). A recent report carried out by the Ministry of Education mentions that 7.5 million students are enrolled in school education. Furthermore, other research carried out by the government of Nepal's Education Department found that numbers of female students are higher than those of males: 51 percent of students are female and 49 percent of students are male in the school system. The overall number of teachers involved in the school system is about 285,000 (MOE, 2013).

Figure 1. 2: *Enrolment in secondary schools*



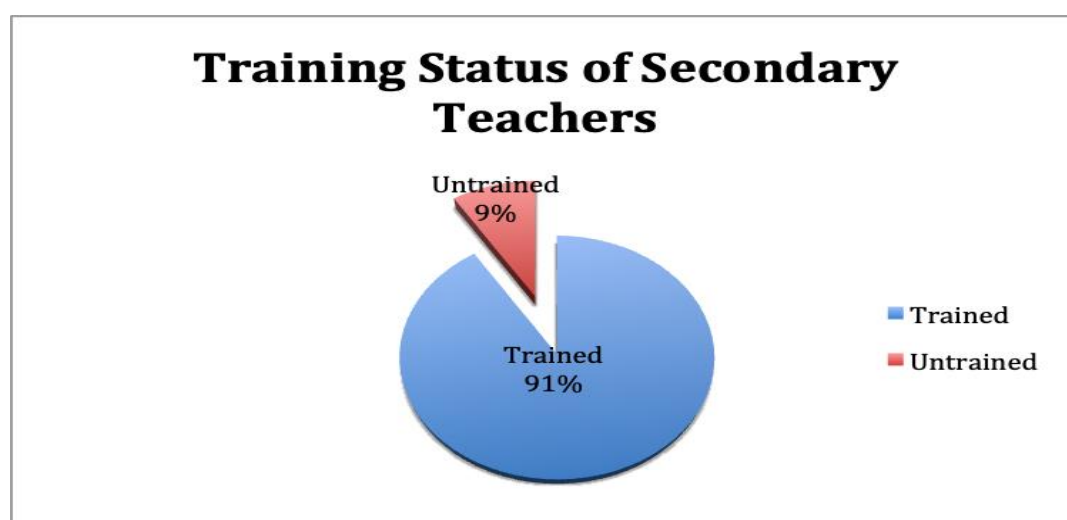
Source: DOE (2015)

The above data for 2015 shows the number of students enrolled in secondary education in Nepal. There are 9,000 schools, among which about 3,000 are private schools, and more than 6,000 are public schools. There are more students enrolled in public schools than in private schools. As per the data, there are 1,077,895 students in total in public schools, which is three times more than the number of students in private schools. Figure 1 also illustrates that the number of male students was slightly higher than that of female students in private schools, whereas there were more female students in public schools. Overall, the number of female students was higher than the number of male students.

In general, student enrolment has decreased in the districts affected by the 2015 earthquake and the enrolment of students has increased in places like Kavrepalanchok and Chitwan because

of migration (MOE, 2016). However, the CBS report published in 2011 revealed that there was an 8.7% school age group in the population who had either never attended school or who had dropped out of their studies due to various reasons and problems. The report identified that the reasons for not attending school were living too far away from a school and other geographical issue that made getting to school difficult, disability and parents' unwillingness to send their children to school, as they preferred their children to work at home. Other reasons were poor academic progress, marriage and financial problems. Overall, people's geographic, socio-cultural and economic situation can be considered as the prime reasons for students not attending school.

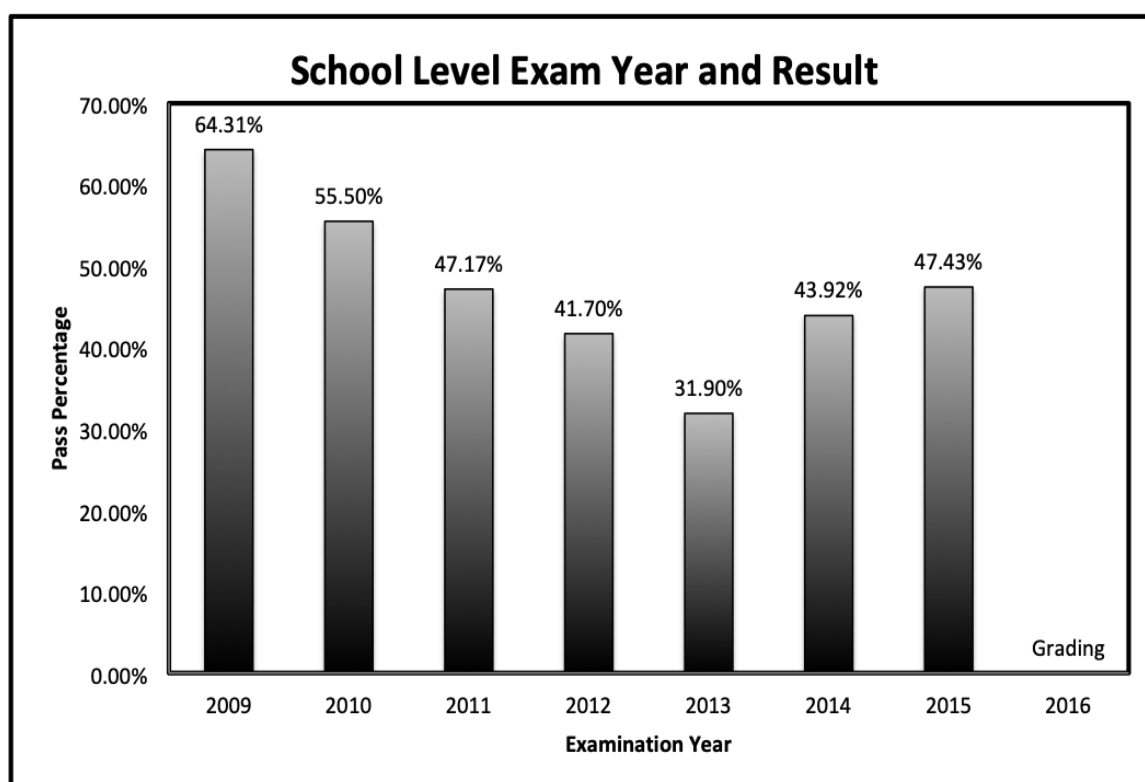
Figure 1. 3: *Status of teachers' training at secondary level*



Source: MOE (2015)

The above data shows the status of teachers' training for secondary level teachers. It details both the percentage of trained and untrained teachers and the number of male and female teachers working at secondary school level. On average, there are about 60,000 trained teachers and the remainder are untrained. The data also shows that the number of male teachers is five times higher than that of female teachers. This may be due to the lack of female empowerment in Nepal, as women are still lacking in political, social and economic rights and therefore are less likely to enter professional careers such as teaching (Mahat, I., 2003). In addition, the government of Nepal provides less legal action for dealing with women's problems. In the changing educational environment, most trained teachers are perceived to be skilled in teaching students.

Figure 1. 4: *Status of secondary level exam results*



Source: MOE (2016)

The school-leaving certificate (SLC) is one of the national examinations that students sit after completing grade 10. The pass percentage of the SLC decreased between 2009 and 2015. However, a new grading result system was implemented in 2016 (MOE, 2015).

## 1.4 Education policy makers and policies in Nepal

### 1.4.1 Department of Education

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is a key government body in Nepal that aims to promote education in the country (European External Action Service, 2010). The Department of Education is one of the divisions working under the Ministry of Education and it was established in 1999. The function of the Department of Education (DOE) is to institutionalise and regularise the activities related to the Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP). The Basic and Primary Education Programme used to work on activities aimed to regularise and institutionalise basic and primary education. Later, the DOE displaced BPEP and all the activities that were taken over by the DOE were termed as BEEP II. The implementation,



monitoring and administrative and financial authority of BEEP II was taken over by regional and district education offices.

A senior education officer called the Director General, who monitors and takes responsibility for all the district education offices, heads the Department of Education. There are 75 district education offices working under Regional Educationalists Directorates (REDs). In addition to the above-mentioned wings of the DOE, administrative, education management and planning and monitoring divisions further support the department and, depending upon the nature of the division, each division is given its own specific role. The administrative division plays a role in general administration, finance and material distribution-related activities. From its name, it is clear that the planning and monitoring division faces the charge of planning, monitoring and undertaking research and developmental activities. Similarly, the educational management division is responsible for early childhood, female students and basic, primary and specific educational activities. The Ministry of Education has specified what the role of the Department of Education should be, and it includes the development of policies to ensure that all children can access equal opportunities in education. The department also has the role of strengthening policies by implementing different reforms, both internally and externally, so that the dissemination of knowledge is child friendly.

In addition to the above-mentioned roles, the Department of Education has also played a role in improving the quality of basic and primary education, school management, the maintenance of teachers' quality and maximising the enrolment of girls in schools. The department has also played a role in encouraging educated women to go to schools to teach and encouraging school-aged girls to go to school by providing school scholarship schemes (MOE, 2010). The main focus of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) is creating an environment for the betterment of the quality of education. School children should be provided with a healthy environment that is part of a resilient infrastructure and experience friendly behaviour. To address the gender inclusion issue, the focus should be on female-friendly practices, which could be implemented by promoting equal access to education and by empowering female teachers and offering training opportunities to enhance their teaching skills (MOE, 2016). The duty of the DEC is to prepare the school calendar, be responsible for teachers' pay, organise teachers' training programmes, perform supervision and audit school accounts (MOE, 2010).

### **1.4.2 Agencies under the Ministry of Education in Nepal**

The Ministry of Education has specific educational objectives to fulfil. There are certain institutions that help the MOE to achieve its set objectives. The institutions working to help the Ministry of Education are the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), established in 1993, and the Primary Teacher Training Centre (PTTC), established in 1992. Similarly, the National Education Commission (NEC), established in 1992, is also one of the institutions that the MOE is in charge of in the education sector. Different institutions have different assigned functions. The NCED is responsible for conducting training programmes through different Educational Training Centres (ETCs), which are located in 34 different parts of the country. Similarly, to look after and design the curriculum and textbooks, there is the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), which was started in 1997 by the MOE. CDC is also responsible for developing the instructional materials for school teaching. CDC periodically conducts workshops, seminars and research-oriented practical programmes to develop useful instructional materials for school teaching.

The School Leaving Certificate Examination Board was established in 1934 under the Office of the Controller of Examinations (COE). The Department of Education also established a Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) in 1951, which is focused on the adult literacy programme. The primary aim of the NFEC is to reduce illiteracy among the adult population of Nepal. According to the 2015 NFEC report, 92.5% of Nepalese aged between 15 and 60 are literate. 164 countries, including Nepal, committed to eradicating illiteracy by the end of 2015 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, because adult literacy was one of the important goals of Education for All 2015. To meet the target, Nepal has also formulated action plans (NFEC, 2015). However, the government of Nepal has not completely achieved the targeted goal and the projects are still being run by the SSDP.

The School Teachers Record Office (STRO) and the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) are some other agencies under the authority of the Department of Education. STRO was established in 1998 with the purpose of keeping essential data relating to the teachers in public schools. STRO is also responsible for helping retired teachers to keep up-to-date with postal service activities and benefits that include pensions, benefits, gratuities, child and family allowances, education stipends and other state-controlled benefits. The TSC is the agency that helps teachers stay aware of the essentials and terms and conditions of teaching jobs.

With the intention of attaining its educational goals, the government made changes to its existing plan and introduced the New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971. To administrate the plan, the Regional Educationalists Directorates (RED) was established. Five REDs were established in five different regions of Nepal to monitor, coordinate and supervise school-level teaching and learning activities under the Regional Education Directorate. The purpose of the district offices is to bring people and schools closer and to help to enhance the efficiency of educational administration processes. District Education Offices (DEOs) are responsible for facilitating, administering and supervising the work of schools in different clusters. The schools in a district are divided into different groups called clusters. A district has a minimum of three and a maximum of 27 clusters depending on the geography, population and number of schools located in that area. In each of the resource centres there is a Resource Person (RP) who provides professional support and services to the teachers and schools in that area. RPs are teachers who have a lot of experience and who are the most highly trained and senior teachers within that cluster area. RPs are under the supervision of, and monitored by, the school supervisors.

In 1989, the government introduced another examination board under the auspices of the Higher Secondary Education Act, called the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB). This board remains in charge of senior secondary education i.e., the 10+2 education system in Nepal. This board is responsible for the production of the mid-level human resources essential to the country by providing the necessary knowledge, skills and training to the individuals who want to start teaching. The HSEB also provides knowledge and skills to students who want to continue their studies by enrolling at undergraduate colleges or universities. After completing higher secondary education, students who are admitted to colleges or universities are educated or taught at these institutions, which are governed by the supreme body of the university: the senate. The senate is responsible for making policy decisions. The senate also governs a separate wing of the university called the University Grants Commission (UGC), which was established under the University Grants Commission Act 1993. The commission was formed to distribute the grants given to universities by the government in order to maintain the educational quality of higher secondary education. The grants must be utilised in areas such as quality assurance, academic curriculum and programme reforms, research and development, teacher training and development and introducing innovation in the education system of Nepal (Pherali, 2016).

Tribhuvan University (TU) was the first university established in Nepal, in 1959. There are another eight universities in different parts of the country. There is another wing of TU called the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID). The main function of the CERID is to undertake different research activities by collaborating with different governmental and non-governmental organisations, including foreign institutions. An Executive Director heads this wing. To further enhance the education system in Nepal, commissions like the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO, recognised in 1954, remain under the chairmanship of the Education Minister. The commission also liaises with the member states of UNESCO for the benefit of mutual interests. UNESCO also advises the government of Nepal in the fields of education, science, culture and society and communications, which are within the jurisdiction of UNESCO (MOE, 2010).

### **1.4.3 School Sector Reform Plan of Nepal (2009-2016)**

The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) has been regarded as a long-term educational strategy of Nepal. The SSRP is based on the view that enhancing competence as well as proficiency in the delivery of education is a key means by which to address current educational issues, as well as to achieve the targets of Education for All (MOE, 2009). This long-term plan aims to increase the number of pupils, as well as to increase the excellence of school education. It also focuses on elementary tutoring for children from minority groups.

The SSR is a joint programme to enhance education quality that is supported by the Government of Nepal and nine Development Associates. In addition, non-pooling Development Associates, such as USAID, JICA, UNESCO and WFP, have also been financially and technically subsidising a number of activities of the SSRP. The Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA), which exists between the nine Development Associates and Government of Nepal, explains and sets out objectives, as well as the possibility for joint financing of the SSRP. In 2009, a total of US\$ 2.6 billion in costs were projected for the first five years of the programme (MOE, 2009). Although the education sector receives the largest amount of the sectorial share of public expenditure, progress is not in alignment with expenditure. One of the prevalent phenomena in public schools is the increase in dropout rates and poor performance due to poor school management. The government is solely responsible for the monitoring system in public sector schools. Private schools claim that they provide better quality education and better performance outcomes than public schools. Public schools generally accept students from low economic backgrounds, as they offer free education, whereas private schools do not.

Private schools do not tend to educate children from economically poor backgrounds (VSO Nepal, 2005).

#### **1.4.4 School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023)**

The primary aim of the government remains to deliver an equitable and excellent education to all the children in Nepal. To achieve this goal, the government developed and started to implement the seven-year School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) in July 2016. This programme is divided into two phases. The first five-year programme is based on the government policy that aims to lift the country out of its least developed status by 2023 through the process of education. On the other hand, raising the status of a mid-income country by 2030 is one of the major aims of the Sustainable Development Goals for Nepal.

Basic Education targets the four to 12-year-old age group; namely, children. Through the Basic Education system, Nepal aims to attain objectives related to the physical, socio-emotional and nonphysical development of students. The policy aims to ensure that students obtain a quality basic education of a universal standard by gaining the required learning competencies. As a part of the SSDP, basic education is initiated by educating children through the Early Childhood Education Programme (ECEP) or Pre-Primary Education (PPE). The programme focuses on the enrolment of children from deprived and vulnerable groups in the community. To achieve the goal of a minimum standard, the programmes of the ECED/PPE are incorporated in schools as an ancillary programme of the school. Through the SSDP programme, the government has focused on bringing children with disabilities into mainstream basic education via screening and several interventions with the help of the Health Ministry. There is an education programme for children who are not in mainstream basic education that implements flexible education schemes and brings them back into formal education. Thus, the SSDP is concerned with maintaining the quality of basic education for all, including vulnerable children, and enabling children to access education in non-violent schools with a child-friendly atmosphere.

The Secondary Education system aims to set the foundation for the future careers of students. Secondary Education has two learning pathways for students; namely, General and Technical Education. After the completion of either pathway, students are awarded the certification. Both the pathways facilitate the transition to higher education, i.e., tertiary or university education, by allowing students to acquire the foundational skills and knowledge essential for higher

education. Likewise, the SSDP aims to recruit a head of Secondary Education who has the skills and abilities to be an effective manager. Technical Education, offered by vocational and technical schools, is undertaken to fulfil the demand for skilled manpower in the country.

Another programme of the SSDP is focused on lifelong learning and it is specially designed for youths and adults. In this programme, reading and learning habits are developed. The program has helped to educate both marginalised and low-skilled workers in order to fulfil the demands of the labour market. This lifelong learning programme is offered to low-income people, the marginalised and women who have been deprived of a mainstream education. This programme is also focused on post-literacy initiatives offered by Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

The SSDP also aims to focus on the professional development and management of teaching staff to ensure the quality and performance of teachers. Investing almost 70% of the SSDP's total funds on educators' payments makes clear the fact that this is the main focus of professional development. There are professional organisations for teachers that encourage taking ownership of the programme.

In terms of the political scenario, the country's political and physical structure has been changed recently after the promulgation of the new constitution in 2016. The country has been divided into provinces and states and education policy reform will change accordingly. The SSDP plan will be developed in different federal states by measuring different indicators on the basis of the facilities available in schools. The local authority, its governance, academic achievement and performance management are some other indicators on the basis of which schools are ranked.

The SSDP is expected to implement its initial phase of the developmental plan within three years. In the initial phase, it is expected to transform the system into one with effective management, funding and human resource capability build-up. Gradually, within the five-year timeframe, the responsibility for school management will be transferred to local authorities, including SMCs and PTAs.

Information and communications technology (ICT) has become vital to the education system. ICT education and knowledge are essential if Nepal is to achieve its long-term goals and integrate Nepalese society into the global community. The Ministry of Education has also

emphasised the importance of ICT education in schools by furthering the notion that ICT is a market- and job-oriented basic education and that this technology also makes teaching and learning activities more effective.

Schools are the second home of children and they need to be safe and risk-free places. In order to maintain a safe learning environment, a Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery (DRRR) programme has been launched under the SSDP programme. To create a safe school environment, a comprehensive safety framework has been designed, which focuses on providing a safe infrastructure for communities. Also, the SSDP has indicated that a healthy and nutritional setting fosters a good learning environment. A plan has been implemented accordingly, providing things such as deworming, vaccinations against malaria, nutritional supplements, a clean and germ-free water supply, sanitary items and hygiene products for girls. This type of healthy and nutritious school environment helps students to develop their knowledge, attitudes, values and skills in order to stay healthy and safe (SSDP, 2016).

In conclusion, the SSDP programme was implemented in Nepal in order to enhance the quality of education by revising the existing policies of Nepal. The Education Act has been implemented in accordance with the new political and physical set up of Nepal. However, the effect of the revised policy on the quality of education in schools is yet to be seen. As it is a recent phenomenon, research on its effectiveness from teachers' perspectives is very scant. Therefore, this research project seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of government policy in the school environment.

### **1.5 Teacher market in Nepal**

The links between education and employment are considered as being an important issue in Nepal. Despite having education facilities, 47% of working age people are not educated. Among the educated population, the number of people with a degree is only 2%. In terms of skills and training, the working population, i.e., those with vocational or professional training, is more than a million—or 8.7% of the labour force (Khare & Slany, 2011).

In Nepal, teaching is considered to be a profession with social prestige. In Nepal, the teaching certificate was not compulsory in all schools in the past. However, since 2005, the government has made the certification of teachers compulsory, but this regulation is not enforced in remote areas where it is difficult to find, or attract, educated persons to become teachers. Unlike the

situation in developed countries (for example, in the U.S.), the state does not require teachers to take certification exams to enter the teaching profession. The government merely appoints teachers in public schools based on the candidate's level of education. With regard to teachers in the private sector, their appointment is made without any influence of state regulation. It is very difficult to find trained and certified teachers in private schools, whereas public schools are well funded by the government so they can train their teachers (Thapa, 2011).

The ratio of trained and certified teachers is higher at the primary education level than at the secondary level. When comparing teachers in the public and private sectors, the percentage of untrained teachers at the secondary level is 4.2% and 20.1% respectively (MOE, 2010). On examining the stability of teachers' jobs, pensions and other benefits, it is found that government-funded schools are far better than privately funded schools. Teaching in private schools in Nepal is considered to be a more easily available job than any other kind of job. This is because of the lack of industrial and infrastructural development in developing countries like Nepal (MOE, 2013).

Politically, Nepal is in a transitional phase. It has an unstable government and that instability has influenced the recruitment of teachers in public schools more than in private schools. As a result, a large number of teachers have joined private schools, despite the fact that government schools are well-funded. There are several private schools: these have better working conditions and are more prestigious than public schools. In terms of the teacher-student ratio and the quality of education, private schools are in a better situation than government-funded schools. This is because of the low student-teacher ratio in private schools in comparison with government-funded schools (Subedi, 2003). In private schools, the medium of instruction is English, and parents are assured of their children receiving an international standard of education; thus, the goals and ambitions of private school students are higher in comparison to public school students (Caddell, 2007).

## **1.6 Quality of education in public and private schools**

Nepal has a dual school system with both public and private schools. In the public sector, the government of Nepal has formulated different plans and policies with the intention of improving the quality of education in public schools. Programmes such as the Primary Education Development Mini Project, Secondary Education Development Project and Teacher Education Project are some of the programmes that have been carried out under the control of



government in order to increase the quality of education (Thapa, 2013). The projects carried out by the government have developed different teaching programs, school infrastructure and teacher training for all levels of the school system. Some of the projects were involved in the development of teacher training in different types of publicly funded schools, i.e., primary and higher secondary schools (DOE, 2009). However, the data shows that private schools with improved facilities have better performance rates than public schools (Thapa, 2015).

The private sector is booming and most of these schools are concentrated in urban cities and district headquarters. Families whose economic conditions are better and who seek quality education for their children prefer to send their children to private schools, as it is widely believed that they offer better quality education in comparison with public schools (Pal & Saha, 2018; Thapa, 2013). The quality of private education has been clearly reflected in School Leaving Certificate results (OECD, 2012). It is claimed that the average pass rate for private schools is more than 80%, whereas in public schools it is only around 30%. Likewise, the rates of students repeating grades and dropping out reveals a lot about the education system when it comes to public schools in Nepal. The flash report reveals that 29.5% of students repeat a grade once, 18% drop out at grade 5 and 34% drop out at grade 8 (MOE, 2011). This illustrates the most serious constraints affecting the efficiency of the education system in Nepal. The main issues are that there is a loss of talent, as children fail to gain the skills they need in later years, and also that educational resources gain no return on their investment. Hence, investment in the education system, in the form of teacher training, instructional materials and classrooms, is largely wasted if students do not perform well or remain in the system long enough to benefit from education (Chimombo, 2005).

Despite the fact that there are a number of training and development projects aimed at improving the quality of education, there are some factors that affect the success of such projects. Several factors are associated with each other, and these relate mainly to teachers' absenteeism, poor motivation, low morale, insufficient professional support, teachers' lack of responsibility and underprivileged school set-ups (Koirala, 2015). Despite the poor infrastructure, in some private schools absenteeism among teachers is low and performance is high. The quality of teachers, schools and the classroom environment, combined with socioeconomic status and other characteristics, are the key factors that broadly determine the quality of education (UNESCO, 2008).

Teachers are believed to be the prime factor for making a significant contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of education (Sabirova, 2014). Moreover, the quality of teaching involves the skills and capabilities of the teacher being channelled into the effective distribution of the most effective learning practices to students. In this regard, teachers' perceptions can play a vital role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning activities within educational institutions (Wanjiku, 2013). The lack of effective training for teachers—such as the use of audio-visual aids for teaching, a lack of awareness of updated technologies and inappropriate teaching methods are found as significant causes for poor performance. Similarly, the lack of up-to-date curricula and textbooks, the use of ineffective assessment systems and the lack of appropriate planning and management systems are also highlighted as being the major factors leading to the poor quality and low efficiency of school education in Nepal (Parajuli & Wagley, 2010). In addition, the existence of advanced and up-to-date teaching materials and better classroom environments also prove fruitful for encouraging and enhancing students' performance at the higher secondary school level in Nepal (Thompson, 2002). Similarly, Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al. (2010) also pointed out that teachers nowadays value the use of information and communication technologies for enhancing teaching and learning practices, which improves the performance of students. With regard to identifying teachers' perceptions of the factors that affect the quality of education, it was highlighted that the inappropriate timing of classes, inadequate training and experimental programmes are some of the major issues that disrupt the integration of information and communications technologies in the field of education. Overall, teachers have positive perceptions with regard to the use of ICT for improving the learning abilities and performance of students in secondary schools in Nepal (Edwards, 2011).

### **1.7 Theoretical framework of the study**

The theoretical framework is the form of model that allows for the study of various concepts. It also includes the proponents of the study and its results in an organised form. The theoretical framework helps to provide a broad explanation of the relationship that exists between the related concepts (Richard, 2013). It is also used for the identification and analysis of the relationship(s) between the dependent variable and independent variable. In Nepal, a traditional method is used in the teaching system: the teacher provides knowledge and students receive knowledge. The quality of teaching, according to the teachers' perceptions, is taken as the dependent variable in this study, whereas students' performance is taken as the independent

variable, because this study argues that students' performance depends on the quality of teaching.

### **1.7.1 Social system theory and significance**

In this study, social system theory has been applied because schools are a social institution in which different internal and external phenomena contribute to the quality of education. Social system theory is one of the distinct theories that considers schools as being a social organisation. Schools are a significant place where children are transformed into adults and schools are a social system that is vital for children developing into adults. Social system theory shows the relationship between people and institutions, as well as attempting to describe the external factors that can have an impact on society (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). The quality of education depends on the working mechanism in schools, which, in turn, is dependent on the social system. According to Parsons, the social system is based on the interpersonal relationships between students, regardless of the size of the class, and other parameters, such as race, gender, economic class, culture and other complexities (Parsons, 1951).

Social system theory is a sound perspective by which to understand schools as organisations. This is because schools are social organisations that provide an education to people in society. Schools are not only oriented towards profit-making; they also have a social responsibility as well. Schools are intended for service delivery, rather than selling any kinds of goods. Mechanistically, schools are focused on the human relations side of educational settings. Schools are considered to be an essential organisation that prepares children for adulthood. As per the open system, schools constantly work together with their surroundings. The most important component of open system is that it transforms raw resources into final outcomes, whereas the system continuously acquires resources from its surroundings and then modifies them as per the requirements of the environment (Tremblay et al., 2012).

The social system is an open school system in which ideas can be exchanged to improve the overall teaching and learning activities, which helps students to enhance their performance. The social system acquires ideas from both the internal and external environment. The transformation of ideas takes place via the process of interacting among individuals and asking for feedback and information. Several external factors, such as social, political and economic forces, always influence the school environment (Bozkus, 2014).

According to Bertalanffy (1956), a system is a mix of entities that are regularly interacting with one another. Systems theory, education and the educational system are very much correlated. Education occurs in a social context. Norden et al. (2012) explained that schools interact with the evolving elements of the external environment and also develop mitigating measures to match or address the changes shown by the external environment. The aim of giving a person an education is to ensure that they can determine their role in the existing social context and perform the responsibilities in society that are expected from them. Systems theory, as explained by Beer (1972), defines a system as being an element or a factor that must be adaptable to diverse and dynamic situations so that it can be sustained in an updated and ever-changing environment. Schools are an inseparable part of the social system that exists in any society.

Schools are a part of society that is constantly evolving and they are often also the cause and effect of the innovation and creativity that can be seen in society as a whole. To properly assess and identify how a school functions, it is important to understand the network that the school has built within society. There exist certain drawbacks in the education system that cannot be explained in isolation. It must always be understood that certain amendments in the structure of society will lead to certain changes in the education system. Turkkahraman (2015) expressed his opinion that the education system cannot be understood in isolation and that it can also not be considered to be immune developing social changes and reforms in the structure of society. By understanding that the education system is indeed part of a bigger social system, the learning capacities of students in educational institutes can be increased and the quality of life of other people involved in the education system can be enhanced (Turkkahrama, 2015). To change the education system, the people or the system involved in initiating the change must familiarise themselves with the social system and bring about changes according to the demands of the social structure.

### **1.7.2 Social systems theory in association with the educational context**

Teaching is also a part of the social system and it involves social interactions, i.e., an effective interaction between the one who imparts knowledge and those who seek to gain the knowledge imparted. Thus, education occurs as a result of an efficient interaction between these elements of society, as explained by Musgrave (1983). Berner (2013) advocated that schools, educational institutions and society are individual elements that are independent of one another, but that they cannot exist without one another. Schools are affected by the external as well as the

internal elements of society or the environment. The major element in the internal environment that can have an impact on education is the student, who can be controlled by the educational institute. However, other factors, such as political pressure, economic imbalance and changes in the societal system, are the elements of the external environment that cannot be controlled by educational institutes. Of these, religious aspects, social class aspects and the social organisational structure beyond the educational institutes have an undeniable impact on the educational system in the society in question (Berner, 2013).

According to Dogan (2011), the classes offered in educational institutes support social and associative learning, rather than only focusing on advancing and increasing the talents of a single individual. Classes are also supposed to bring about changes in the behaviour of students that match the certain expectations and behaviour valued by society, which is ever changing. The needs of society and also the needs of the individuals within society have caused educational institutes to become highly interactive with other social institutions and to develop a mutual and long-lasting relationship with them. The longevity of schools is dependent on the ability of schools and the schools' output to have a beneficial impact on the betterment of society (Turkkahraman, 2015). Nowadays, the educational institutions that cannot address the changing and the evolving needs of society are boycotted and discouraged from operating.

Social system theory has been instrumental in showing the relationships among various factors within the educational context (Wenger, 2010). The application of system theory to teaching quality—particularly when examined from the teachers' perspective can add a new dimension to its functionality. Therefore, this study chooses social system theory as the principal theory for developing the literature review and theoretical model. It seeks to improve the theory with evidence from the empirical data used in this study.

### **1.8 Rationale of the study**

The main purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions of teachers with regard to the factors that affect the quality of teaching and its impact on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Nepal.

Nepal does not have a long history of educational development—its education system was formally established in 1853—and wider efforts are being made to improve its educational system (Parajuli & Wagley, 2010). However, the Nepalese educational system has faced

several challenges because government assistance of the education sector has not been consistent over the years (Parajuli & Wagley, 2010). The government allocated 13% for education in its last annual budget, in 2018, which was 3% less than the previous year (DOE, 2018). As a result, educational institutions lack both infrastructure and teaching and learning resources.

The researcher has chosen this topic in order to understand how a developing nation, in this case Nepal, is moving towards the development of an education infrastructure and to explore of some of the steps that have been taken by the government, as well as private authorities, in this area. In addition, this study identifies the different factors that secondary school teachers perceive to have a severe impact on the quality of their teaching, along with their impact on the performance of students.

Very few research studies have been conducted on this topic and the perceptions of secondary school teachers on the factors affecting the quality of teaching and student performance have not been discussed either in detail or in an effective manner. In addition, this study was conducted in order to analyse a particular research gap; namely, teaching quality and its impact on student performance, which was identified by the researcher during his work as a teacher in Nepal. The researcher has experience of teaching in both private and public schools in Nepal over a period of between 3 and 4 years and he decided to observe and analyse the differences in the quality of teaching by undertaking a thesis on this topic. This involved studying teachers' perceptions of class size and teaching quality. Exposure to the research topic, as gained through his experience of teaching in schools, encouraged the researcher to further explore the issue of teachers' perceptions of the factors associated with teaching quality. Teachers are one of the most important elements in the educational process, what they perceive as important in the delivery in that process, which can affect how they conduct themselves and their teaching activities. This research will address the following areas:

#### Educational institutions and stakeholders

The education sector in Nepal has received much attention from the government, private institutions and communities who have invested resources in improving the quality of education. In the present educational context, where there is competition among different educational institutions and stakeholders. This study can provide information and assistance to the primary executives of secondary schools to help them to formulate an effective strategy by

which to minimise the challenges of secondary education in order that they do not affect the performance of students. However, there has been little research on how teachers can enhance the quality of education, especially with regard to the performance of students. This study aims to address the concerns of educational institutions and stakeholders and to fill this gap in knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how teachers' perceptions of factors impacting quality can link to and potentially act to improve students' performance.

### Government policies

The Government of Nepal has drafted many plans and policies to improve the quality of education in Nepal following the introduction of democracy. So far, the focus has been on the students' and academic institutions' perspective. Teachers, who are an integral part of the teaching and learning process, have received little attention. This research addresses this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence on how teaching quality can improve students' performance.

### **1.9 Statement of the problem**

The study of teaching quality and its consequences is one of the most discussed topics in education around the globe, particularly in developing countries. This topic is attracting more attention in developing countries because global educational policy has demanded its effective implementation in these regions in order to improve the quality of education (UNESCO, 2010). The importance of teachers in improving the quality of education has been discussed in the existing literature. Authors such as Behm Cross et al. (2018), Leu and Price-Rom (2006), Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (2007) and Bergh and Wahlstrom (2018) discuss the role of the teacher in bringing about better performance. There are also studies on how various factors play a key role in the quality of education. One of the main factors is teachers' sense of responsibility and dedication to their profession (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012; Jaaskela et al., 2017; Akareem & Hossain, 2016). Several studies have focused on teaching quality and other influencing factors, which have been found to contribute to students' academic performance (Barrett, 2011; Behm Cross et al., 2018; Evans, 2014; Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2007).

The focus of current research is on the relationship between teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its outcomes. The existing research's focus on teaching quality and student

performance has mostly examined developed countries (Thompson, 2016; Hanushek, 2011; Hollins, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2005). Some research (Farooq et al., 2011; Kosgei et al., 2013; Agharuwhe, 2013; Bojuwoye, 1992; Gore et al., 2017) has been carried out on this topic in developing countries as well. Scant research (Pangeni, 2014; Thapa, 2011; Nepal & Maharjan, 2017; Subedi, 2003; Dahal & Dahal, 2015) has been carried out in relation to teaching quality and its contribution to students' academic performance in the Nepalese education system. Crucially, taking teachers' perceptions into consideration has not been the focus of previous research. As teachers are thought to be the chief contributors in the education system, examining their perceptions is a helpful way of gaining insights into various aspects of teaching quality and student performance. Thus, this study explores the perceptions of teaching staff regarding issues including teaching quality, challenges, the factors that contribute to poor performance and the impact of policy/planning and implementation. This study endeavors to fill the gap in the existing literature by applying social system theory and examining teachers' perceptions, which has not been done before in the context of Nepal.

### **1.10 Aims and objectives**

The main aim of this research study is to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the factors that affect the quality of teaching and their impact on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Nepal. To achieve this aim, some objectives have been set for this study. The major objectives of this study are presented below:

- To examine teachers' perceptions of the impact of teachers' professionalism on quality of teaching.
- To examine teachers' perceptions of the impact of effective pedagogy on quality of teaching
- To analyse teachers' perceptions of the impact of the school environment and resources on quality of teaching.
- To explore teachers' perceptions of government policy and implementation and their impact on quality of teaching.
- To explore teachers' perceptions of parental responsibilities and other socio-cultural factors that have an impact on quality of teaching.



## **1.11 Overview of the thesis**

This thesis contains of a total of seven chapters, and each chapter provides the details of the different stages of this research.

The first chapter of this study delivers a brief introduction, which helps readers to understand the current education system, educational policies and current status of the education system in Nepal. In addition, the first chapter also includes the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, the theoretical framework, the research question and the aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter two of the thesis presents the different literary sources that are associated with the aims and objectives of the research. Chapter two also includes a literature review on the quality of education and the factors that contribute to teaching quality, which provides a wider context for the issue under study. The chapter also includes existing knowledge about teachers' professionalism, effective pedagogy, school environment and resources, government policy and implementation, parental responsibilities and other socio-cultural factors that are related to students' academic performance. Chapter two also presents the theoretical model of social system theory and its links to the education system in Nepal.

Chapter three of this thesis is the methodology chapter, in which different methodological techniques are highlighted. The methodology chapter includes the research method, study area, sampling method and population, pilot study, ethical issues and other methodological tools used in the study.

In chapters four and five, the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data are presented and analysed.

Chapter six presents the analysis, as well as appropriate discussions of the findings derived from the collected data. Furthermore, the chapter offers a detailed discussion of the findings and their connection to social system theory. The chapter compares and contrasts the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter seven is the last chapter of this thesis and it provides the conclusion of the study. In addition, the final chapter also discusses the implications of this research and makes recommendations for future study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review explores and identifies the findings of previous research in relation to the current study, which aims to explore the relationship between teaching quality and students' academic performance. In particular, this research examines factors including teachers' professional development, qualifications, experience and classroom teaching and learning activities. A literature review provides an in-depth overview of a study on a research topic and helps the researcher to investigate, and shape the aims and objectives, of the chosen research area. The main purpose of a literature review is to gain an understanding of the subject, problems and knowledge gap in the particular area of study. The current research can be more meaningful if the previous ideas, methods, findings and recommendations are reviewed. This study aims to contribute to theory and practice in the current education system in Nepal, which will address the existing research gap. Thus, searching related literature will help the researcher to develop a strategy for the research.

## **2.2 Literature search strategy**

The main sources used are the textbooks and journal articles found through online searches. The electronic database Summon, available from the University library service, was used to find important journal articles. Quick searches, key word searches and database searches, for example, were carried out to find related journal articles. These searches led the researcher to online systems for archiving academic journals, such as JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, ELSEVIER, Science Direct, etc. In addition, the University library catalogue was equally useful for finding books, printed materials and monographs. Various search engines, such as Google Scholar, Google Advance Search, etc., were also suitable sources for accessing literature related to teaching quality and student performance. Furthermore, the websites of governmental organisations and national and international non-governmental organisations were also frequently visited to access relevant policy documents, reports and data.

## **2.3 Quality of teaching and students' performance**

Education is considered to be the most important factor in developing the knowledge and learning ability of an individual. In this regard, education is a two-way process—particularly teaching and learning (Guerriero, 2014). Teaching and learning are important factors that highlight the foundation for development. The learning ability of students is supported through the quality of teaching. Effective and successful teaching are the two basic characteristics that indicate the quality of teachers (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009). Quality teaching is a key factor influencing the development of quality outcomes among learners. Olofson and Garnett (2018) highlighted the fact that quality teaching considers the needs of diversified students belonging to different cultural and ethnic groups who have different backgrounds, languages and genders. Quality teaching is flexible in practice and the teaching requirements are matched to the learners' diversity.

Evans (2014) identified that the delivery of quality teaching is a complex procedure in developing nations due to crowded classes, untrained teachers and a lack of resources. These factors are highlighted as being major problems in developing nations, thus creating a barrier to implementing quality training. Barrett (2011) stated that teachers' feelings of disagreement during their training leads to a clash between teaching and learning activities. Human capital and human rights approaches are the two dimensions that are a key issue of debate in the area of delivering quality education. Barrett (2011) emphasised the fact that the key to providing

quality education is emphasising the prospects of individuals, society and the community as a whole. Social justice theory is a broad theoretical principle that outlines the need for an equal approach to justice, opportunity, wealth and well-being for every individual. This theory portrays a vision of society where individuals are not discriminated against or isolated with regard to religion, gender, race, class or culture. The consideration of individuals is a major factor in enhancing the quality of education. Akareem and Hossain (2016) argued that students' perceptions of scholarship provision, the education of their parents, age, extra-curricular activities and recent results have a significant impact on the quality of education. The regulation policies formulated by universities and schools can be useful for creating a favourable environment for quality education. However, there are some major factors, such as lack of effective leadership, insufficient resources and poor working environment, that disrupt the quality of teaching, thus leading to stress for both teachers and students (Baur & Hankel, 1997; Biggs, 2001).

There is no clear definition of the quality of teaching, as it is diverse in its nature and it is a multi-dimensional construct (Fabrice, 2010). Defining an effective model by which to identify the knowledge-based ability of students is a challenging process. Identifying students' abilities and needs is a challenging task when designing quality teaching activities (Behm et al. & Cross et al., 2018). The relationship between teachers' standards and students' needs, combined with an effective teacher recruitment process and the placement of a qualified teacher in the classroom, matters most when it comes to quality teaching. The placement of a qualified teacher allows for the needs of both students and teachers to be matched. Qualified teachers can communicate effectively and meet the requirements of learners. However, the teaching environment is dynamic and the challenge of delivering quality education keeps on changing; thus, there is a constant need to develop new skills for effective teaching and learning. Bergh and Wahlstrom (2018) learned that the inappropriate distribution of teachers disrupts the quality of teaching, leading to a disadvantage for learners. One of the reasons for this is that teachers are not allocated systematically. Qualified teachers mostly reside in urban areas and there is a lack of qualified teachers in rural areas. Moreover, in places where there are inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, teachers specialising in one subject often teach other subjects to students (Evans, 2014). Teachers may not have enough knowledge of these other subjects and the learners may not receive the required knowledge as a result.

A gap therefore exists in the field of education when the input (i.e., experience, qualifications) and output (i.e., value added through the teachers' performance) quality of teachers is inequitably distributed. Furthermore, understanding different teaching and learning practices and effectively delivering education services also determines the quality of teaching. Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (2007) found that both the cognitive ability and personality of the teacher define the performance of students and that having just one of these qualities is insufficient for quality teaching.

The quality of teaching depends on the mixture of overall personal developmental aspects and the social practices of teachers. A teacher's social background also affects their teaching style. For example, female teachers from a society with gender equality tend to deliver positive lessons to their students and encourage them to achieve their personal goals irrespective of their gender (Abdu-Raheem, 2015). Teachers are a major component of the education system as they are the ones who impart education to students. Without the teacher, the learning process cannot be completed. As the quality of teaching is associated with teachers, it is necessary to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the quality of teaching. Although there are various studies that have focused on the quality of teaching, limited literature has concentrated on teachers' perceptions.

## **2.4 Teachers' beliefs in, and perceptions of, the quality of teaching**

Teachers are a contributing factor in the development of a quality education system. The quality of teaching is defined by the ability of the teacher to implement the best learning practices for their students. In this regard, the perceptions and beliefs of teachers regarding education are an effective factor in understanding the quality of the education system. Thomas (2013) highlighted the fact that both qualified and unqualified teachers share similar perspectives on using teaching contents and approaches in the classroom. In the context of identifying the relationship between teachers' perceptions and job satisfaction, Cristina-Corina and Valerica (2012) discovered that job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions are positively associated. Moreover, the perceptions of teachers about their profession depend on their attitude towards their work.

Jaaskela et al. (2017) found that teachers view the use of technology in education as being an important factor in encouraging the self-learning abilities of students, as it leads to active and interactive learning. Teachers tend to believe that the use of technology in education is also

likely to influence the development of both students and teachers. Northcote (2009) revealed that teachers' beliefs regarding teaching strategies, preparation methods, assessment techniques, course design and direct interactions are crucial factors in influencing teaching practices in education.

Teachers' values and beliefs play a major role in influencing the quality of education (Jaaskela et al., 2017). The clear vision of teacher's ability to reflect on their work is an important factor in increasing educational standards. Hopkins et al. (2016) found that the evaluation and inspection of teachers has a negative influence on teachers' practices. This is because the majority of teachers believe that outside evaluations question their expertise in teaching. However, the evaluation of teaching is necessary as it facilitates the identification of positive and negative outcomes as reflected in the learners. The findings of Hegde and Cassidy (2009) concluded that, in the process of educational development, teachers usually perceive themselves as being incompetent due to a lack of effective training skills. The perceptions of teachers are not based on gender or seniority; they are more dependent on their qualifications and experience. Teachers' perceptions, beliefs and agreement with developmental practices enhance the practices of students, thus enabling them to gain higher marks. The focus of teachers on active developmental practices also enhances the learning ability of students. Andersen & Andersen (2017) found that the perceptions of teachers, in terms of identifying the challenges and opportunities in schools, facilitate professional development activities. Teachers are thus a key part of the educational system, as they are the ones who are in daily contact with students and implement educational policies and practices. There is a positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of education and their educational practices. Teachers with positive perceptions can contribute positively to education. Teachers with a positive attitude and the intention to develop the education system tend to deliver quality education to learners and their values are reflected in their teaching. On the other hand, teachers with negative perceptions of education may implement indifferent educational practices. Teachers with a negative mind-set are in education only to earn a living and they do not care for the learners and their future. Teachers are a key contributor to the education system and their contribution cannot be ignored (Andersen & Andersen, 2017).

Research conducted by Canrinus and Fokkens-Bruinsma (2014) highlighted the fact that the perceptions of teachers are significantly associated with the effectiveness of teaching practices in secondary schools. With regard to the perceptions of social studies teachers in secondary

schools, problem-solving ability was highlighted as being the most effective factor in teaching, while note-dictation was found to be least-effective. Furthermore, it was found that the educational qualifications of teachers have an impact on enhancing the effectiveness of teaching methods. Thus, the presence of qualified teachers in schools is a key measure that educational institutions should adopt to enhance the quality of teaching.

Teachers usually perceive input factors, rather than output factors, as being a key element for encouraging improvement in the quality of education (Dagnew & Asrat, 2016). There is a positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning activities and their method of teaching. Teachers feel that if they do not have sufficient input attributes, they are unable to deliver a quality education to their students (Yates, 2007). Conversely, Park and Sung (2013) argued that external attributes are the key elements responsible for improving the quality of education in schools. In addition, in both public and private schools, the socio-economic status of students was found to be a major contributing factor that influenced the teachers' perceptions of the quality of education. The majority of teachers in both public and private schools shared the same opinion; namely, that external factors play a major role in improving the quality of education.

Yee and Chen (2009) emphasised that teachers view external attributes, such as the development of curriculum activities in schools, as being one of the major elements that ensure the quality of education. The implementation of curriculum programmes in schools enhances autonomy, thus ensuring the development of policies associated with educational programs. The implementation of the curriculum in schools faces challenges as a result of the use of the top-down teaching approach, which provides learners with an overview of the subject, i.e., the big picture, without an explanation of its components (Canrinus & Fokkens-B Bruinsma, 2014). Teachers who adopt such an approach expect students to learn all the content immediately, even when students are completely new to the subject. In addition, Goodwin and Kosnik (2013) found that the establishment of a performance appraisal system in schools has a positive impact on teaching and learning activities. The lack of an appropriate appraisal system highlights the weakness of an institution and it is likely to demotivate the teachers from delivering quality education. Therefore, it is essential for school institutions to develop an adequate appraisal system, which will enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

## 2.5 Teachers' agency

Teachers' agency, in the educational context, has both positive and negative aspects. Some researchers argue that teachers' agency is a challenge for schools, while others argue that it is important due to the existence of complexities in the educational system. Focusing on teachers' perceptions and beliefs about education, Biesta et al. (2015) found that teachers' agency is indispensable when it comes to complex educational problems and that its promotion relies on individuals' beliefs about their activities. It is important to analyse and identify the dynamic factors that contribute to the enhancement of teachers' agency in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning practices.

Consideration of social system theory helps to improve the comprehensive practices of teachers. Social system theory generates an effective learning environment as a result of the fact that teachers communicate and share information with their students (Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2007). The relationship between individuals is a major factor that influences the best educational practices. Bridwell-Mitchell (2015) argued that cognitive and social conditions drive the effectiveness of teachers' practices and lead to educational reform. Having an understanding of just one of a teacher's qualities is insufficient for exploring the teaching and learning environment. The teacher agency network brings balance to both the cognitive and social forces involved in facilitating better learning practices and this results in benefits for the educational institution in terms of positive changes (Resnick & Scherrer, 2012)

The effectiveness of teachers' agency practices in educational reform is dependent on both past experiences and the objectives of the educational practices implemented by teachers being relevant to teachers' personal and professional values. There are different forces that create challenges for the effective networking of teachers and it is necessary to address such factors in order to facilitate effective networking practices (Bergh & Wahlstrom, 2018). In addition, the evaluation and inspection of teachers has a negative influence on teachers' practices (Hopkins et al., 2016). Brainard and Brislen (2007) found that the disclosure of policy on knowledge and equity standards, and its assessment of consistency, is a critical issue encountered in the effective development of teachers' agency. The effective consideration of relevant issues is required to facilitate teachers' networking practices. Offering training and seminars to beginner teachers helps to support teachers' developmental practices in schools and universities.



## **2.6 Professionalism in teaching**

Professionalism is defined as the quality of conduct associated with a profession. There are different factors required for developing professionalism, which include the inclusion of specific knowledge, ability to compete, honesty, integrity and the ability to take responsibility. Existing research has analysed the quality of teaching, but there are very few studies that have examined professionalism in teaching. Cristina-Corina and Valerica (2012) stated that professionalism in teaching is concerned with the activities that are directed towards the learning practices of both students and teachers. The effective learning experience of teachers helps them to explore the ideas of students by encouraging them in the effective practice of knowledge development. Moreover, Northcote (2009) argued that the application of initiatives creates a favourable environment for enhancing professional development and professionalism, while also stating that professionalism can be developed when there is active collaboration between teachers and other professionals involved in the field of education.

In educational institutions, emotional intelligence facilitates the identification and understanding of the various needs of teaching and learning practices, thus creating a situation in which professional competency can be enhanced. Issues may arise in relation to professionalism when the evaluation of teachers is conducted in an ineffective learning environment (Jaaskela et al., 2017). In such a situation, disagreement may arise while evaluating the level of teachers' performance with regard to professionalism. Such a conflict may arise as a result of the combination of two opposite forces; thus creating a contradictory result in the development process (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). This conflict may be harmful to the learning process. Thus, the learning environment for the teacher—as a learner—is crucial for enhancing professionalism in teaching. Institutions must conduct research on evaluating teachers' professionalism in order to check whether the learning and teaching practices are being effectively followed (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). Hence, while professionalism results in the improvement of teachers' performance, it can also influence the performance of the students. Professionalism in teaching could fulfill the diversified needs of individuals as well as society.

### **2.6.1 Teachers' professional development and learning**

Fullan and Mascal (2002) claim that the professional development of teachers is the basis of the success of any initiatives related to students' learning and school improvements, as well as

the implementation of policy and programmes. The professional development of teachers is associated with the overall development of the education sector, as a skilled teacher who is equipped with relevant skills can play a vital role in enhancing the school system and student learning process, in addition to carrying out the apt implementation of relevant policies and procedures. The quality of teaching could be enhanced if there is a focus on the professional development of teachers, which, in turn, could improve the academic performance of students.

Professional development and learning are critical factors that ensure effective teaching and learning practices in schools. Teachers' professional development is a complex process: it requires the combination of cognitive and social competencies in order to demonstrate effective knowledge, which leads to an improvement in students' outcomes. Effective learning development practices can be enhanced when the teacher's mental abilities are combined with an understanding of social tendencies. Dunn et al. (2018) found that children's social environments have a significant impact on their personal and professional development. Critical awareness, changing values and beliefs and knowledge practices are factors that have an impact on the development of skills with regard to professional development. In this context, Desimone (2018) stated that the development of a conceptual model helps in building knowledge practices and facilitating effective directives in order to understand learning practices. Webster-Wright (2017) argues that learning practices need to be fostered through professional development practices rather than content analysis practices. An effective balance between the teaching and learning process results in active professional development.

The professional development activities of teachers are also concerned with programme design, which provides an opportunity for students and teachers to enhance their skills in the field of education. The implication is that such actions should be part of a continuous practice, which explores the skills and abilities required to learn in the long run. However, Petrie and Mcgee (2012) argued that there is a requirement to provide clarity when it comes to designing programs for professional development, otherwise it may create difficulties in developing students as learners. The factors that influence teachers' learning practices need to be effectively analysed in order to ensure that professional development activities are effective. The way that teachers learn and implement their knowledge into practice has a significant impact on their supervision, professionalism and leadership abilities. Phillips (2008) addressed the need for professional development in the field of education in order to facilitate school reforms and allow for the sharing of knowledge between different generational groups.

Professional development can be achieved in schools through the effective implementation of a technology plan that ensures improvements are made in teaching and learning practices. The growing use of technology in schools, such as computers, iPads, mobile learning and online education, helps to improve learning and increases engagement in both students and teachers (Webster-Wright, 2017). However, it is up to schools to implement such technologies and many might not be able to afford them.

Donche and Van Petegem (2011) examined the influence of teachers' empowerment on teachers' organisational commitment, professional commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour in schools. They highlighted that teachers' perceptions of their characteristics were significantly associated with their commitment to professional development activities. Attributes such as professional growth, status and self-efficacy were found to be effective measures by which to ensure a significant association between educational practices and teachers' level of commitment to their profession. The commitment of individuals towards their profession is likely to be increased if teachers perceive themselves to be professionals. The different attributes and qualities of the teacher play a vital role in enhancing teachers' professional development and student achievement as well.

Yates (2007) found that the demographic features of teachers, such as gender, age and education level, were not significantly associated with their professional learning abilities. It was also shown that for both primary and secondary school teachers, the use of information communications technology and the curriculum had a positive impact on their professional learning abilities. However, Badri et al. (2016) argued that the demographic attributes of teachers, such as age and gender, do have a significant impact on teachers' professional commitment and development. They found that male teachers are getting more opportunities for professional development than female teachers in developing countries. In most areas, female teachers are not encouraged to work on, or engage in, any professional development activities. Moreover, many females are not allowed to go to school to gain an education. The reason for these restrictions varies from poverty to superstition to rural beliefs. The various attributes of teachers therefore have a significant impact on learning abilities and professional development activities and, therefore, it is essential for educational institutions to understand and analyse the distinctive backgrounds of teachers and students in order to facilitate an opportunity for mutual understanding and cooperation in the educational environment.

Professional communities enhance the active participation of individuals in teaching and learning activities. Avalos (2011) found that the formation of professional learning communities positively influences teaching practices and the achievement of students. However, with regard to professional development in education, inadequate state regulation, non-systematised information and a lack of systematic conditions are the critical issues that create a barrier to professional development. It is important to clearly define objectives and to develop an environment of sharing both culture and values if professional development programs are to operate effectively. An understanding of the cultural perspective of education also helps to enhance professional development.

Effective teaching is achieved only when there is proper educational planning and professional development (Ololube, 2006). A study conducted into the relationship between students' performance and teachers' professional development revealed that teachers' training is directly proportional to effective teaching in terms of student achievement (Rahman et al., 2011). Furthermore, Bauer and Hankel (1997) and Biggs (2001) added that, when it comes to ensuring the quality of teaching, teachers' personalities could act as a motivating factor. Similarly, Azam and Kingdon (2015), Haris (2008) and Pradhan (2011) emphasised that teachers' training is one of the factors that has an impact on the quality of education (ADB, 2002). Generally speaking, teachers with only academic qualifications are less effective than teachers with academic certifications as well as training certifications (Stronge, 2007).

Nepal has also been facing issues in terms of its ability to continue to provide professional development programmes, which is one faced by other developing countries. A report by the Asian Development Bank (2002) revealed that there is a lack of trained teachers in Nepal, while Subedi (2004) found that the effectiveness of teacher training programmes could improve the quality of school education in Nepal. Research conducted in developing countries, such as Pakistan, into the ways of improving the quality of education through students' performance shows that in order to become successful, a school must implement programmes such as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to develop effective teachers (Tahir et al., 2014). Such programmes boost not only the quality of teachers but also the achievement of students. Hence, more professional development is recommended as a means of improving teachers' quality and students' academic achievements, which, in turn, will improve practice in teaching and learning (Cavalluzzo, 2004). According to Hattie (2009), teachers play a major role in enhancing the learning system in schools and are the prime agents that have an influential

impact on the quality of education. Furthermore, trained and well-qualified teachers are capable of providing quality education to students (Donald, 2008; Scheerens, 2005). Moreover, UNESCO suggests that well-trained, qualified, empowered and motivated teachers can help to enhance quality of education (UNESCO, 2015). On the other hand, Oluremi (2013) argues that professional development comprises activities that improve the distinct talent, understanding, proficiency and additional features of educators (Pangeni, 2014).

Evans (2014) argued that exploring multi-dimensional cultural aspects is essential in enhancing leadership practices and encouraging professional development. A learning process developed from the society that plays an active role found helpful to equip behaviours and skills in defining both personal and professional development. In the field of enhancing professional development in the teaching and learning process, different factors, such as technology-related knowledge, training and related pedagogical knowledge, have been analysed. Driel and Berry (2012) found that the knowledge associated with enhancing active professional practices needs to be implemented in exploring the opportunities for individuals. They also argued that a high level of professional qualification is required for individuals to deliver pedagogical knowledge. In the case of a failure to attain a high level of professional knowledge, the performance level of individuals is likely to decrease.

## **2.6.2 Teachers' academic qualifications, experience and characteristics**

Teaching is effective if teachers' knowledge of the content to be taught, teaching experiences, training, qualifications, roles and teaching methods are properly implemented in the classroom (Parajuli & Das, 2013; Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011; Fetler, 2001; Harbison & Hanushek, 1992; Oyibe & Van, 2015). However, Zuzovsky (2003) concluded that teachers' academic qualifications, their subject knowledge and years of experience do not play a vital role in boosting the quality of education, because those factors are not the major indicators of education quality. Zuzovsky's research also urged that the most essential and sensitive indicators by which to increase the quality of education must be sought out, implemented and recommended. Various researchers, i.e., Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) and Youngs (2002), have shown that various aspects, such as intellectual capability, information about and understanding of the subject matter, acknowledgement of teaching and learning and teaching behaviour in the teaching space, are associated with teachers' quality and the increased attainment of students. Students' accomplishments improve in correlation with the experience of the educator (Buddin & Zamarro, 2009; Coe et al., 2014; Rockstroh, 2013).

Kola and Sunday (2015) investigated teachers' qualifications and their impact on the educational attainment of students. They measured the qualifications of teachers by examining seven parameters, i.e., official and proper education, experience, understanding with regard to subject matter, pedagogy education, duration of training, official recognition and authority and, finally, proficient development (Wiswall, 2013). Goe and Stickler (2008) also studied teaching quality and its impact on students' performance. They highlighted the four qualities of a good teacher, i.e., qualifications, characteristics, practices and effectiveness (Campbell et al., 2004). Clotfelter et al. (2006) studied teachers' effectiveness and showed that extremely experienced educators have a tendency to support privileged pupils and that teachers' experience is consistently associated with students' achievement (Budding & Zamarro, 2009). Similarly, Betts et al. (2003) found that teaching quality has a positive relationship with qualifications, experience and subject knowledge (Subedi, 2011; Hanushek et al., 2005). Moreover, Kosgei et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between teaching experience and students' academic performance, while Ehrenber and Brewer (1994) found that teachers' characteristics have an influence on the educational attainment of pupils.

Similarly, a study into teaching quality was done by Rice (2003). She asserts that preparation programmes, degrees, certification, experience, coursework and teachers' test scores are attributes that help to enhance the quality of teaching. Experience is important in the initial phase of teaching, but it is more effective in secondary schools than primary ones. However, Huang and Moon (2009) found no statistically noteworthy association between teachers' experience and students' performance.

A comparative study of Finnish schools and schools in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, by Maria and Jari (2013) found that Finnish teachers' perceptions of good teaching skills are comprised of substantial knowledge of the content, pedagogical skills and the personality of the teacher. These influence both the quality of teaching and student achievement. Farooq et al. (2011) found that teachers' training, class size, teachers' experience and qualifications, teaching and learning methods and teacher-student relationships are factors that affect teaching quality. DeLuca (2016) explains that the ability to establish interactions with pupils, combined with easy-going, caring and benevolent behaviour, understanding of the learners, devotion to teaching and pleasing pupils are the qualities of effective teachers. The authors also discovered six mechanisms of quality teaching; namely, content knowledge, the excellence of teaching,

classroom environment, teachers' opinions, personality and specialised actions. These help to maintain the quality of education.

Hence, the learning environment for teachers as learners is one of the crucial forces in enhancing professionalism in teaching practice. However, with regard to professional development in education, inadequate state regulation, non-systematised information and a lack of systematic conditions are the critical issues that create a barrier to professional development. The above literature (Fullan & Mascal, 2002; Driel & Berry, 2012; Pangeni, 2014; Dunn et al., 2018; Desimone, 2018; Webster-Wright, 2017) suggests that the quality of teaching depends on teachers' professional development, which enhances students' academic performance. However, there is gap in knowledge about the impact of teachers' academic qualifications and teachers' professional development on improving teaching quality in Nepal. Thus, this study investigates teachers' perceptions about how to improve the quality of teaching and will explore empirical evidence in the context of Nepal.

## **2.7 Teaching pedagogy and resources**

A teacher's skills and capabilities determine the method of teaching that they use. Teachers not only have an impact on the motivation of students; they also have an impact on the environment in which students learn (Lee & Cross Francis, 2018). Using the evidence gleaned from the available documents, both the student-centred and teacher-centred methods were empirically and comparatively studied. Both teaching pedagogies were tested and the student-centred teaching method was found to be more effective in terms of improving students' achievement (Lee & Cross Francis, 2018). Despite this evidence, teachers are given freedom of choice in terms of the teaching and learning methods they use (Izumi, 2001). In addition, Sanders and Rivers (1996) found that the student-centred teaching method, in which students explore their own ideas and views, has a less significant and less fruitful impact on students' achievement. However, Smith et al. (2001) studied the instructional approaches used by teachers and their relationship with student achievement. They found a controversial result; namely, that the direct instructional (i.e., teacher-oriented) method is more popular at secondary level. This method results in below-average attainment, whereas the interactive instructional (i.e., student-oriented) method results in higher student achievement (Wenglinsky, 2002; Figlio, 1999).

Schienfeld (2015) found that teaching methods not only influence students' learning process but also their academic performance. Teaching styles, the classroom setting and physical

resources also have a direct impact on students' performance. Plessis (2019) illustrated that teaching methods may vary from teacher to teacher and that individuals might have their own style of teaching. The study examined the perceptions of teachers regarding teaching methods and found that effective teaching methods are useful for enhancing students' performance. Liu et al. (2015) put forward the view that despite the fact that the learner-centred teaching style has been encouraged in higher education in the contemporary era, the teacher-centered teaching style might be more common in practice.

Nowadays, high numbers of schools use information and communications technology (ICT) to deliver knowledge in interesting ways. Adesote and Fatoki (2013) opined that ICT has the power to transform human activities. On the other hand, the use of ICT in education has been lagging behind, as most education institutions implement the traditional method of teaching (Jia et al., 2017). Very few studies have considered the significance of teachers' perceptions of teaching methods and resource management in Nepal. According to Dahal and Dahal (2015), ICT delivers abundant opportunities for schools in emerging nations like Nepal to enhance the processes of both learning and teaching. However, most schools in emerging nations like Nepal lack the elementary infrastructure for ICT, for example, the computers, internet connections and audio-visual facilities that are needed to create a foundation for e-learning. Against this backdrop, the quality of teaching and learning is perceived to be enhanced in schools where teaching and learning activities are carried out via information and communications technology (Azam & Kingdon, 2015).

Recently, Woodcock and Woolfson (2019) examined teachers' perceptions regarding teaching methods. They found that the attitudes of teachers as to whether they are a pre-service teacher or in-service teacher change when any interventions take place. Pre-service teachers adopt teaching methods learned through self-learning and in accordance with their own perceptions of education and teaching, whereas in-service teachers change or improve their teaching and treatment of students. Similarly, Tavakoli and Baniasad-Azad (2017) found that teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning are affected by teachers' different professional development experiences. Chen and Mensah (2018), however, argued that in order to change their teaching method, teachers have to change their attitudes about learning and teaching first. The findings of these studies show that teachers play a key role in the selection of learning and teaching methods and that it has a direct impact on students' performance. Savage (2016) carried out research on teachers' perceptions of whether they would choose the same career if



they could live their lives again and the majority of them answered “Yes”. The content of teaching courses within the education system and the content of teachers’ training programmes play an important role in building optimistic attitudes about teaching as a profession.

Another commonly used teaching method is encouraging learning through homework. Homework can be defined as work that provides assistance to students in their learning (Paudel, 2012). Homework helps students to create useful study habits, for example, by setting objectives, managing study materials, scheduling and developing plans to cope with mistakes and complications. Homework also functions as an analytical instrument that permits teachers to monitor the improvement of their students on a regular basis (Vally & Daud, 2015).

Sufficient resources and proper management help schools to use their funding in an efficient way, but administrative staff need to utilise the resources effectively (Bakx et al., 2015). There is no fixed rule for evaluating educational resources, but there are some factors that have been found to be involved. According to Mestry and Bodalina (2015), teachers’ perceive that effective physical resource management has a significant impact on the quality of learning and teaching in schools. The maintenance, utilisation and procurement of physical resources through the use of ordered structures, combined with rigid processes and well-designed policies, are crucial for quality education. Physical resources are managed by government bodies in the case of government schools; in private schools, they are managed by school executives and shareholders (Plessis, 2019). Therefore, educational resources and physical assets need to be managed effectively through the use of provisional and school-based structures, processes and policies. A study conducted in Nepal by the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID, 2002b) shows that the average class size is inversely related to achievement level, which is one of the indicators of quality measurement. In the same study, it was concluded that the quality of education and better physical infrastructure have a greater impact on students’ performance (CERID, 2002b). Similarly, Subedi (2004) explained that, in Nepal, the size of the teaching space, the accessibility of the teaching and learning materials and the teacher’s ability to make use of available resources led to higher attainment.

According to Chen and Mensah (2018), the existence of formal structures in schools is of cardinal importance: there should be a proper understanding of the delegation of authority, accountability and responsibility. Lee and Cross Francis (2018) found that in order to make effective, economical and efficient use of schools’ resources, formal and informal structures,

processes, systems and policies have to be implemented. Another idea for resource management is establishing an asset management committee, along with a finance management committee, in order to manage and oversee the educational resources and physical assets of schools (Hastings et al., 2015; Franke et al. 2015).

The above literature on teaching methods and resource management suggests that effective teaching methods and the supply of necessary materials enhance students' academic performance; however, further empirical evidence is needed in the context of Nepal. This research study tries to address this knowledge gap, as no study has been carried out to examine teachers' perspectives on the quality of teaching and its impacts on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal.

## **2.8 School environment and facilities**

Students need a healthy, stimulating and safe environment in which they can learn and grow. This is because an excellent school environment, as well as the facilities provided by the school, help to foster the ability of students to learn and perform well. A positive school environment encourages both teachers and students to teach and learn effectively and efficiently (Lawrence & Vimala, 2012). Students spend around 6 to 8 hours at school and the school environment plays a critical and important role in their development. Students spend most of their time in the schoolyard and travelling around school. Thus, the school area needs careful designing and planning, which will help to optimise students' experience and to support health, education and stewardship (Ramli et al., 2014). Ige (2018) showed that teachers are aware that the school environment plays a significant role in shaping and reshaping intellectual life at school. A favourable and supportive learning environment and facilities could encourage students to become more involved in classroom activities. The development process of education starts with the psychological, physical, social and cultural environment. A favourable school environment delivers the necessary stimulus for enhancing students' learning experience. As students spend most of their time in their schools, the school environment can influence the performance of students via the curriculum and the implementation of excellent teaching techniques (Ige, 2018).

Schools these days are ultimately linked to society as a whole and the general condition of schools has become a subject of great concern for every nation. According to Al-Dababneh et al. (2017), schools are an environment where knowledge is developed at different levels. The

school building, surroundings and environment where knowledge is acquired are as significant as the knowledge itself. Bakx et al. (2015) showed that teachers perceive that students can perform better when the school environment provides serenity and comfort. The study further illustrates the fact that while constructing the schools' infrastructures various issues need to be considered. The school should appoint talented professionals, such as experienced architects and planners, so that they can pay attention to the proper designing of the school building. This is particularly important for secondary school buildings, as school infrastructure has a serious effect on users' performance.

According to Ramli et al. (2014), one of the most significant factors that affects students' learning achievements is their home environment. Their study also found that students from educated families, i.e., those who have a parent with a high level of education, were better performing students. On the other hand, students whose parents have a lower level of education have been shown to have poor performance. In private schools, the school environment and students' performance are better compared with community schools. Private schools can maintain a good school environment with infrastructures of a high standard, physical facilities and varied educational materials (Ip et al., 2017).

Classrooms, a library, laboratories, school buildings and other infrastructures are essential facilities for a school. A favourable school environment, along with appropriate facilities, helps both teachers and students when it comes to effective teaching and learning procedures (Higgins et al., 2005). According to Oden et al. (2015), the importance of the school environment for students at secondary level cannot be exaggerated. The reason is that the school environment has a great impact on the quality of teaching that students obtain and the degree of attention and responsiveness they devote to lessons. Oden et al. further explain that the school environment and discipline, in addition to the physical facilities, have a notable impact on the academic accomplishments of students in secondary school. The aforementioned study by Zee and Koomen (2017) found that other issues, such as the lack of resources for teaching and learning activities, instructional strategies and the shortage of teachers, combined with teachers' attitudes, determine the quality of education. The researchers used a ten-item questionnaire consisting of school-related characteristics and identified that these characteristics have an adverse effect on pupils' academic performance (Zee & Koomen, 2017). However, it has been argued that there are other factors that influence students and schools in terms of academic achievement, i.e., teaching environment, students' intelligence,

parental education, socio-economic status, the personalities of the stakeholders, etc. The researchers suggested that a better school environment (e.g., having a library, laboratories and spacious and comfortable classrooms) would further improve teaching and learning activities (Leithwood et al., 2004). Furthermore, it has been suggested that school leaders can create a better environment by providing facilities for both teachers and students (Agharuwhe, 2013).

The Ministry of Education is showing an interest in enhancing the quality of education in Nepal by creating a digital environment in which students can access information and communications technology to enhance their performance level (Thapa, 2011). The government's vision is to provide an e-library in every high school in Nepal. Kolbel (2017) stated that Nepal has started developing a reading culture in schools by providing students with open and free access to reading materials.

There are five environments within the school context: these are the political environment, social environment, economic environment, religious environment and teaching and learning environment. The political environment is made up of the executive body, teachers' union, students' union, etc. The social environment is the network and culture within the individual groups in the school. The economic environment consists of the economic factors associated with schools, such as income, employment, productivity, inflation, productivity, interest rates and wealth. The religious environment consists of religious or cultural factors and there is a chance of students being discriminated against on the basis of their caste, language and religion. The teaching environment refers to the classroom, which is where teachers and students interact with each other (Karki, 2015). The school environment is made up of the school building itself, the furniture, the classrooms and teaching materials. It also includes the time spent within the school compound and the school's surroundings. Hence, learning is directly related to the school environment.

The World Bank Report (1997) found that most of the schools in developing nations are run with minimal facilities, such as furniture, teaching instruments and reading materials, and that they offer low-quality schooling. For instance, in India, over 8% of schools were operated without designated buildings in 1987. In some of the rural areas of India, such as Tamil Nadu, the class size in primary schools was 78 (World Bank, 1997). A lack of teachers and classroom facilities caused teachers to become overloaded and students to perform poorly. Over 90% of Vietnamese students in rural areas attended class for just three hours per day because there were not enough classrooms and teachers for schools to run a full day of classes. The schools

had no option but to run two or more shifts within the given time period per day (Glewwe, 2004)

A previous research project evaluated the Secondary Education Project (SEP) in Nepal by using a qualitative study to examine the potential determinants of students' academic performance. The study pointed out the large gap in performance between public and private schools and argued that poor physical facilities, a shortage of resources and ineffective management are the most important factors that account for the stark differences between public and private schools (Thapa, 2013). As a result of the fact that a comfortable school environment creates a positive learning environment for students, a high number of secondary schools in Nepal pay attention to providing a proper school environment and facilities, which has resulted in the positive academic performance of students (Thapa, 2013). However, Timsina (2008) stated that teachers' effectiveness is the parameter by which to measure the factors of schools' effectiveness. The politicisation of teachers and the influence of political ideologies through teachers' unions, combined with high absenteeism and inefficiency, are the major factors that lower the quality of public schools.

Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) found that a number of elements within the school environment have an impact on teaching and learning. These elements are instructional materials, physical facilities, the size of the classroom, the availability of a library, laboratories and textbooks, the availability of electricity and the location of the school. For this reason, the school environment is a significant area that ought to be planned, as well as appropriately managed, with the intention of improving the academic achievement of students (Obilo, 2012). Similarly, Nepal and Maharjan (2017) found that the physical facilities of a school have an influence on the learning atmosphere as well as students' results. Their study pinpoints the effects of accessibility and the use of physical facilities, including technology, furniture, playgrounds, drinking water, emergency health services and libraries, in addition to schools' accomplishments, and finds that these are helpful in promoting school level education (Gautam Stephen et al., 2015).

Puccioni (2015) argues that a positive school environment encourages students to learn more. The parties who are directly linked to the school environment are staff and teachers, parents and the community. In recent decades, educators and researchers have recognised the significance of the school environment. There is no consensus or fixed set of dimensions related to the school environment. This term refers to the character and quality of school life, which is

related to its values, norms, social interactions, interpersonal relations, organisational processes, organisational structures and culture (Cavrini et al., 2015). Ultimately, a good relationship between the teachers and students in a school creates a healthy school environment. Similarly, the involvement of parents in school life and a supportive environment at home create a better learning environment. Given the increasing importance of education and increasing competition between schools in terms of the quality they deliver, there has been significant investment in schools around the world. However, not all countries are seriously concerned about the school environment and they are only focusing on infrastructure development. Although a good school infrastructure is part of the school environment, there are different aspects, such as teaching quality, that need to be focused on by the schools of today (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015).

## **2.9 Government policy and implementation**

Government policies normally provide schools with contexts in which to implement the relevant educational and curriculum policies; however, the primary planners of policy in the context of classrooms are teachers. This makes it very important to study and assess teachers' perceptions of government policies and the implementation of these policies (Tuytens & Devos, 2009). Not much attention has been paid to evaluating and assessing how teachers perceive and respond to government policies and the curriculum principles that are guided by these policies. Moreover, teachers' efforts and creativity in interpreting policy texts and translating the policies into action are also not frequently studied. In other words, the ways in which teachers perceive and respond to government policies and how they implement them has not been studied enough (Zhai, 2018).

Tuytens and Devos (2009) investigated the perceptions of prospective teachers regarding the education policies of the government in developing countries. Teachers feel anxious, disturbed and worried about the future when they view the government's education policies as being inconsistent and unstable. Tuytens and Devos's study is generalisable to Nepal as Nepal also suffers from the same issue. As a result of frequent changes to various policies, there are difficulties in implementing these policies. Moreover, as their study suggests, there is a significant lack of participation of teachers in policy-making and not enough research has been conducted to collect and consider the views of teachers (Sezer, 2018). This makes it likely that teachers in Nepal view government policies negatively and are likely to resist the changes described in these policies.

Another area of concern regarding the perceptions of teachers on government policies is multilevel policies. A study by Fairhurst and Nembudani (2014) argues that teachers perceived multiple policy overlaps and interactions as possibly being negative, because the policies limited the ability of teachers to provide a consistent and meaningful education to students. This, according to the study, influenced the rate at which specific teaching strategies were used. Government policies may be perceived by teachers as being in conflict with standardised practice and this can significantly alter the quality of education provided by teachers (Peterson et al., 2017).

The formulation and implementation of government policies has traditionally taken into account the views and voices of actors, such as central governments, technical experts, donors and various non-governmental organisations. However, the perceptions of teachers are generally missing from the policymaking process (Sezer, 2018; Hinnant-Crawford, 2016).

Hinnant-Crawford (2016) reported that teachers have very little or limited knowledge about how policies are formed by the government. Moreover, teachers reported a significant degree of distrust in policymakers and their intentions. Teachers are sceptical as to the motives of policymakers when it comes to the quality of education. The study found that there was a significant disconnect between teachers and policymakers. The teachers perceived the policies as not being very effective, as they were sceptical about the level of knowledge and information that the policymakers had; that is, the teachers doubted whether the policymakers and their policies always focused on what would be best for students.

There are lots of challenges when it comes to the teaching and learning models used in the 21st century. These challenges mainly arise from increasing globalisation, information and communications technologies and socio-economic development. In order to tackle challenges within the teaching and learning system, new perspectives on educational activities are needed. Capable leadership, improved policies, a needs-based curriculum and innovative methods of teaching are the key contributing factors for improving the quality of teaching (Sarkar, 2004). Most of the teachers exhibited a significant distrust of the policies and policymakers as they felt that politicians and policymakers thought more about their own ends and gains than the children being educated. The teachers' negative attitudes towards policy also stemmed from the fact that they were not involved in, or consulted about, any decisions. The teachers felt that they were not valued enough and thus their voices couldn't make a significant difference to the policies (Ellison et al., 2018).

Teachers' perceptions of government policy are a major determinant of the success or failure of the implementation of a policy because they are the one who must implement it. Research has suggested that although teachers are altogether positive about new policies, they are not clear about the ways of implementing the policies. It has been reported that teachers are more likely to resist a policy if the policy seems to threaten their professional position, if teachers perceive the policies as not being helpful to their work or if the policies are perceived as being unlikely to yield the outcomes desired by teachers (Mintz & Kelly, 2018). Therefore, the perceptions of teachers depend on their expectations and personal views, and this affects the implementation of government policies.

Government policies, as well as their implementation, play a significant role in the education sector of any country. The government is actively involved in formulating novel policies that assist in enhancing the education sector and delivering an excellent education to all citizens. Khagaraj Baral, the deputy director of the Nepalese Department of Education, explains that Nepal has created noteworthy enhancements in the educational sector by using advanced guidelines, as well as the execution of different educational agendas (Gautam & Alford, 2014). The Government of Nepal introduced the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009) to improve the quality of education in the nation (Nepal & Maharjan, 2017). However, this became additionally challenging after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal (Kolbel, 2017).

Gautam Stephen et al. (2015) stated that the significant aspects that contribute to the accomplishments of secondary schools in Nepal are the commitment of, and hard work done by, head teachers regardless of the challenges created by political, technological, human, physical and socioeconomic factors. Furthermore, while establishing the direction for the school, a head teacher leads in order to encourage improved levels of learning for every one through the use of proper, transformative procedures (Summers et al., 2017).

Karki (2015) found that the curriculum is well thought out as a complete academic programme and established with the intention of accomplishing the goals of the national education system in order to provide an essential structure for teachers working in schools. The author further explains that the English language curriculum in schools in Nepal was established with the aim of creating a widespread ability to communicate in students. Karki attempted to discover the level to which educators are teaching the English language at secondary level in Nepal. In the Nepalese education system, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) is the only examination that marks the completion of secondary school and allows admittance to higher education



(Bhudhathoki et al., 2014). The effectiveness of a school depends on excellent teaching, in addition to the abilities and enthusiasm of its teachers (UNESCO, 2008). The government has different plans and policies that have been developed with the intention of improving the quality of education in government institutes. The plans and projects established by the government have developed different programmes in relation to school infrastructure, teacher training, etc. Some of the projects are concerned with the professional development of public schools (DOE, 2009). Despite having such projects in place, there is still a lack of quality education. There are several factors associated with this and these factors are teacher absenteeism, poor motivation, low morale, insufficient professional support, a lack of accountability in teachers and poor school infrastructure, among others. Teachers themselves have less faith and trust in public schools, which are shown by the fact that they enrol their children in private schools (Koirala, 2015). One of the fundamental factors that help in the attainment of excellent performance, in terms of private schools, is the enhanced management of such schools (Aslam, 2009).

Furthermore, governments are responsible for financing resources and motivating quality teachers by providing a teaching and learning environment (Oyibe & Van, 2015). Similarly, certain factors, including ideological and socio-economic factors in addition to the existing education structure and teaching and learning theories, are also responsible for shaping the quality of teaching. Therefore, the quality of teachers is the most important factor by which to boost students' performance (Rahman et al., 2011). As per the National Education Policy (2009), there has been a rapid change in the modern development of the education system. Every teacher needs to know about the new policy and needs to be able to implement it through hard work and dedication in order to improve both the quality of education and students' performance.

An examination of secondary literature in the context of Nepal revealed some of the major factors that contribute to students' poor academic performance, especially in public schools. These factors are the practice of implementing a centralised curriculum in a diverse population, teachers not being dedicated to giving their best and the use of traditional instructional teaching and learning methods, i.e., teacher-centred pedagogy and chalk and talk. In addition, poor school infrastructure, poor classroom availability, the unavailability of textbooks and school location are some key factors that also affect the quality of education (Parajuli & Dash, 2013). It is suggested that the centralised curriculum should be converted into a localised, individual

educational system, as the existing system is the reason for poor performance. On the other hand, motivation can increase the speed of work, encourage active student participation in learning and foster a healthy competitive environment among students that contributes to enhancing the quality of education (Brown, 2001).

A report by ADB suggests that curriculum reform is an essential part of the development of education and that the curriculum should be updated from time to time to make it relevant to, and effective in, enhancing students' academic performance. It is believed that an updated curriculum contributes to a needs-based education, which, in turn, could enhance the economy and development of the country. The old model of theoretical knowledge creates unemployment, which is the most problematic and challenging issue in many developing countries like Nepal (ADB, 2002). Many schools are not running very smoothly due to political instability and this is responsible for poor student performance to some extent, as political ideology has an influence on the development of educational policies. The educational plan of any country is based on the political thoughts of the government of that country. Therefore, politics plays a fundamental role in investments in education, the founding of educational goals, the establishment of a set of courses nationwide, the handling of teachers and pupil assessment. Hence, it remains vital that governments set up educational strategies and guidelines that permit teachers to accomplish these tasks (Adam & Kafle, 2013).

Research on the education system in Nepal has not adequately investigated or reported the perceptions and views of teachers in relation to government policies and the implementation of these policies (Pangeni, 2014). As a result, teachers' perceptions have been identified as being major determinants of the implementation of policies and the improved quality of education. Regardless of what the curriculum and other governmental education policies instruct, it has often been found that teaching is influenced more by teachers' perceptions (Ellison et al., 2018). The current literature on government policies and their implementation needs further attention in relation to student performance, as very little empirical evidence is found in the literature—especially in the context of Nepal. This study will thus explore the situation in Nepal in order to fill the gap in existing knowledge.

## **2.10 Parental responsibility and socio-economic factors**

Teachers' perceptions regarding parental involvement are strong determinants of the quality of education provided to students (Goren & Yemini, 2017). Teachers who exhibited negative

attitudes toward parental involvement were associated with the poor academic performance of students and this led to poor parental involvement. Moreover, Goren and Yemini (2017) showed that in cases where students were from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or culturally and linguistically different backgrounds, teachers' perceptions of parental involvement could have a significant influence on the achievement and performance of students. The association between parental involvement and student performance has been long established. Research suggests that teachers can act as the most important intermediaries by bridging the gap between the school and the community/parents (September et al., 2016).

There are different views about parental involvement and these often vary from school to school or teacher to teacher. According to Veland et al. (2015), the socio-economic background of schools or parents strongly determines the level of parental involvement. According to the researchers, it is more likely that parents from urban areas will show a higher degree of involvement in their children's education than those from rural areas. This view, however, has been criticised, as many other variables may come into play when it comes to determining the extent of parental involvement. Goren and Yemini (2017) suggested that teachers perceive parental involvement as being important and that there is a lot of room to improve and increase the participation of parents. The study also reported an interesting contradiction: Although most teachers agreed on the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children, they were sceptical of a greater level of parental involvement

An interesting finding of the study by Norman (2016) is the significant difference in the perceptions of teachers regarding parental involvement at secondary and primary levels. This suggests that teachers at primary level might perceive parental involvement as being more important than teachers at secondary level. The fact that more females are appointed as primary school teachers than secondary school teachers may have contributed to the overall increase in the positive perceptions of parental involvement at the primary school level in comparison with the secondary school level. Puccioni (2015) affirmed the findings mentioned above and stated that primary school teachers have a generally positive attitude towards parental involvement. Most teachers attribute a poor school-parent relationship to a lower level of parental involvement and also stress its influence on the academic performance of students. The study also reports that when children begin exhibiting challenging behaviours, parents are increasingly reluctant to demonstrate more parental involvement, while teachers feel that parental involvement is more important for such children. Teachers perceive that it is very

important for parents to be involved in their children's education and to participate in the critical decision-making process. They feel that parents should be the primary agents for providing support and encouragement to their children (Puccioni, 2015).

Education is thought to be the most important tool for augmenting development and is perceived to be indispensable to individuals acquiring various opportunities in life (Porumbu & Necoi, 2013). One's socio-economic position, academic qualifications and profession have long been acknowledged to be the most important determining factors of educational registration and attainment in both developed as well as developing nations (Gore et al., 2017). Similarly, Michubu (2013) explained that socio-economic factors affect the educational activities of students in secondary schools. The author provided details regarding the ways that the academic qualifications of parents, their income level and the extent of their involvement in the education of their children hampers children's educational performance. The paper also explained the ways that the financial and material assistance provided by parents determines the educational performance of their children. Poverty is one of the factors that can affect students' academic performance. However, poverty alone is not responsible for all of the differences in the performance of students (Witte, 2015). In order to raise the educational abilities of their children, parents need to help children at home by fulfilling their needs in relation to materials and facilities, which have been found to be significant in helping children to learn. In the same way, the ease of use of learning resources in the home is increased in families where parents are both academically accomplished and economically established. It has been found that educated parents provide learning materials to encourage the curiosity of their children when it comes to learning (Michubu, 2013).

The behaviours and attitudes of teachers towards their students may be influenced by their perceptions of socio-economic factors and the status of their students. Teachers are more likely to encourage students with a higher socio-economic status than those with a lower socio-economic status, and this encouragement greatly determines the performance of students (Hastings et al., 2015). Teachers were found to exhibit a kind of bias against students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Some teachers' belief that poverty is the fault of people who are not willing to work hard was apparent in their behaviour towards children—which ranged from pity to sympathy (Chen & Mensah, 2018). Parental involvement was similarly influenced by teachers' perceptions of the socio-economic status of families. People with a lower socio-economic status were less involved in education because they were less confident

about having the right to voice their opinions. On the other hand, people with a higher socio-economic status were more likely to be involved as they felt that they had right to interact, to inform the school and to participate in the decisions made about their children (September et al., 2016).

Witte (2015) and Porumbu and Necsis (2013) argued that excellent parent teacher relationships remain less common for families with very low income levels than for wealthier families. The authors further claimed that variations in culture and language also influence the relationship between parents and teachers. Yunus et al. (2011) state that parents communicating with teachers while dropping off and picking up their children from school, attending parent teacher meetings on a regular basis, helping with school programmes, attending parents' seminars and going on class excursions help to build a robust connection between parents and the school.

Farooq et al. (2011) conducted a study in Pakistan on the subject of the quality of teaching and its association with students' performance in which different influencing factors, such as socio-economic status and parental education, were studied. The study concluded that the socio-economic status of parents and parental education influence children's educational activities. In contrast, Topping (1994) discovered that sitting at the back of the classroom and absence from lessons negatively affects students' performance. However, the father's education level, parental income and the student's age are other factors that affect performance, as argued by Younger et al. (1999).

In Nepal, the socio-economic factors responsible for students' performance are low income, gender and the exclusion of individuals from certain castes and marginalised groups from society. Pageni (2014) indicated that family characteristics are one of the factors that affect achievement in mathematics, which are trailed by pupil's characteristics, school features and parental participation. Other significant variables were the academic qualifications of parents, non-attendance, assistance provided by parents for home assignments, the type of school and its location, educator training, the number of school days in the educational year and school amenities (Pageni, 2014). Bhatta (2005) attempted to explore the factors that contribute to students' performance with reference to the socio-economic status of parents. The research discovered statistically noteworthy variances in the performance of pupils and found that parental support at home played an important role in improving students' performance. The research also discovered that pass rates for government institutes were comparatively low in

public schools in comparison with private schools because economically weak parents send their children to public schools (Harb & Shaarawi, 2009; Raychaudhuri et al., 2010).

After reviewing these studies, the researcher realised that the aforementioned studies did not address the problems of poor performance in relation to the perceptions of teachers and head teachers, which are very important when it comes to improving both the quality of education and students' performance. The researcher believes that, by examining teachers' ideas, knowledge and techniques, it will be possible to fill the gap in knowledge and to solve the problem of how to improve the quality of education. The existing research can be generalised to countries like Nepal to some extent, due to the more or less uniform results of the existing research and the fact that it examined various developed as well as underdeveloped countries. However, insufficient research has examined Nepal.

## **2.11 Theories of education**

Theories of education are concerned with the approach to, and understanding and interpretation of, the system of education and learning. The use of educational theories facilitates the identification of the most effective educational and learning practices. However, theories of education also challenge or disrupt commonly held views and existing educational practices. Educational theories, such as individual fulfilment theory, suggest that individuals are the initiators of personal learning. According to the theory, if a student is given the freedom to explore ideas by her/himself, along with receiving guidance from teachers and supervision from their school, this will be helpful in terms of improving his/her performance (Azaola, 2012). As per individual fulfilment theory, the teacher or school remains in the background to provide assistance to the student whenever needed. There are different theories associated with education, thus signifying that there is no one-way of understanding and explaining how individuals learn and how individuals teach. Some of the theories that discuss the purposes of education are conflict theory, functionalist theory, symbolic interaction theory and social system theory.

Functionalist theory was proposed by Durkheim and it identified the role of education as being that of socialising people in mainstream society. Some hidden roles of education are pointed out by functionalists, which include transferring social control and core values (Sarid, 2017). In education, core values reflect the characteristics that help the economic and political system. This theory also focuses on the positive functions that the educational system performs.

Functionalist theory is based on the education system, which is served by societal needs. It emphasises that education facilitates the development of social solidarity and cohesion in society as it plays a vital role in advancing the culture of a particular society from one generation to the other. The theory also highlights the existence of a meritocratic society in education; namely, where the educational qualifications of an individual and their job recruitment are interconnected (McLuskie, 2003). As per Durkheim, education acts as an entity that communicates culture, shared values and beliefs. The theory also emphasises the fact that schools are part of society, which facilitates the gaining of specific knowledge and skills. However, functionalist theory ignores the concept of social inequality. Excessive emphasis is placed on the positive aspects of society (Scheerens, 2015). There are different functions that are performed by education; namely, the creation of social solidarity, the teaching of skills required in work, the teaching of core values and the allocation of roles. In the field of education, functionalist theory has been evaluated positively as it has found that solidarity is fostered by schools and that education today is more focused on work due to the rise in the number of vocational courses available (Gordon, 2018). However, functionalist theory has been criticised for ignoring the negative aspects of school and for killing creativity. With regard to the education system, the existence of a meritocratic society is criticised as it overlooks the concept of power inequalities in society (Levinson et al., 2011).

Conflict theory emphasises the fact that the purpose of education is to maintain social inequality and the powers that dominate in society. The proponents of conflict theory do not think that social inequality is reduced by public schools and they believe that the social inequalities that arise from gender, race and class differences are perpetuated by the educational system (Hendriks, 2009). In addition, the theory suggests that conflict is an important aspect of social order and schools are considered to be responsible for producing class conflict and social inequality (Sarid, 2017). Unlike functionalist theory, conflict theory emphasises the preservation of the status quo and drives an individual of lower status towards compliance. Conflict theorists see the education system as being the helping hand of society and as having a great social impact. They view education as being a system that maintains existing unequal power structures through the creation of an obedient workforce.

Symbolic interaction theory emphasises the social interactions that happen in the classroom, on school premises and in the playground (McLuskie, 2003). It also focuses on the relationship between different people in society. Research has shown that the social interactions that take

place in schools affect gender development and that teachers' expectations have an impact on the intellectual abilities of students. Any researcher or social scientist who uses symbolic interaction theory looks for patterns of interaction between different individuals (Levinson et al., 2011). This theory mainly involves observing individuals' interactions, whereas conflict theory focuses on the study of the inequality or protest that arises as a result of differences in class. Symbolic interaction theory provides a foundation for other theories, which enables researchers to make effective interpretations of social interactions. Symbolic interaction theory encourages students who have weak conversational skills to communicate with others by using symbols, to take part in other creative or interactive sessions within or outside the classroom surroundings and to actively participate in creative activities that increase interaction with others. Symbolic interaction theory prioritises studying how individuals interact during group protests in order to communicate their opinion or message. However, this theory is subject to criticism because overemphasis is placed on the level of human interaction. It has been argued that this theory neglects physical reality, ignores the emotional dimension of human interaction and overemphasises the significance of the personal behaviour of individuals (Gordon, 2018). One of the major problems with this theory is associated with teachers' perceptions and expectations, which may affect the level of performance of students. Gordon (2018) argued that when teachers perceive students in a less optimistic way, they do not have any expectations of them and thus are inclined to devote less time to those students and to act in a manner that causes them to learn less.

### **2.11.1 Social system theory**

Social system theory is one of the most prominent theories in relation to education. Talcott Parsons first formulated it in the 1950s within his AGIL paradigm. Parsons argued that a culture and language system should be present in society to maintain the social system (Bozkus, 2014). From the sociological perspective of a society, the social system refers to the network of individuals, groups and organisations that work in collaboration to form a complete whole. Social system theory is used for detecting the relationships that bond people and institutions. Schools are a form of social system as they endeavour to unite people through education in a relationship that eventually helps to enhance both the economic system and society (Shanks, 2008). However, social system theory may be difficult to understand because the implications of the theory depend on the circumstances in which it is applied.



The main aim of this research project is to understand the education system in Nepal and to examine teachers' perceptions regarding the quality of teaching and the impact of teaching quality on academic performance in secondary schools. Nepal is a developing country and is still in the process of developing basic infrastructures, such as education, transportation and health. The Nepalese education system is divided into six levels comprised of pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, basic, secondary and higher secondary. Secondary education is made up of grades 6 to 10. The Teacher Service Commission is responsible for the selection and recruitment of teachers in various community schools in Nepal. A recent study showed that only 30.95% of teachers are permanent teachers at secondary level, which is a very low number when compared with the number of teachers needed (Regmi, 2017). There are various factors that play a significant role in affecting the quality of education in Nepal. These factors are culture, tradition, regional diversity, educational environment, untrained teachers, the lack of study materials, the lack of government support, the poor management of schools and a lack of coordination, among others (Pangeni, 2014).

The social system theory of education is best suited to this dissertation. This is because this theory is regarded as being an effective academic theory that enables researchers to identify and understand the relationships between society and education. In this context, conflict theory places a greater emphasis on the social inequality that arises as a result of differences; functional theory focuses on the functions performed by education rather than on schools and symbolic interaction theory is related to the interactions that take place between individuals. Thus, social system theory is one of the most used theories in the study of the school system and social system theory is one of the most realistic models that can be used in the study of schools (Bozkus, 2014). Furthermore, social system theory is an appropriate model for this in this research project because this theory helps to unite people through communication within the education system. The theory will thus be useful for examining teachers' perceptions in relation to the quality of teaching and its impact on students' performance. Social system theory also identifies that individuals from culturally diverse groups, income levels and backgrounds, etc., can communicate with each and unite in order to implement a standard secondary education system that will develop children's learning and contribute both to the economy and society (Parajuli & Wagley, 2010). Social system theory can also be used to examine the characteristics of schools.

### **2.11.2 Social system theory and its history**

Social system theory is an approach to the study of society that views society as being a complex arrangement of elements, including individuals and their beliefs, which are related to wider society. Different types of system include machines, organisms, physiochemical systems and social systems (Elder-Vass, 2015). System theory today has two different variants: as a theory influential among biologists, mathematicians, physicists and chemists and as a paradigm of sociological theory (Badia, 2016).

Society has been studied as a social system for a long period of time. The conceptual origins of social system theory can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, specifically, the work done by the philosopher and English sociologist Herbert Spencer and by Emile Durkheim, who was a French social scientist (Shanks, 2008). According to Spencer, the societal system was constantly evolving in the process of turning into a perfect state. However, other alternative forms of social system theory argued that society is not evolving; rather, it is moving towards complete complexity, which is known as structural differentiation. The complexity of the social system was revealed by social system theory, which stressed the limitations of directing society.

In sociology, the social system is considered as being composed of the institutions that work together to make a complete whole. It is different from functionalist theory as it focuses on the changing nature of the social environment and enables researchers to understand both the positive and negative aspects of society. A sociological concept in functionalist theory is concerned with the association between the role of the smaller units within society and the function of society as a whole (Greenfield, 2011). The theory is used to examine the relationships that connect organisations and people and which eventually contribute to society at large (McMahon & Patton, 2018).

Social systems have been defined by Parsons as being a social system involved in individuals' plurality, whereby interactions between individuals take place in the presence of different aspects of the environment, especially in the context of a culturally structured system (Parsons, 1961). The theory developed by Parsons was highly influenced by ideas from physiology and the thinking environment. The social system either relates to non-social environments or to a social system's other internal environments. This definition of the social system has been explained by Ogburn and Nimkoff: "[A] social system may be defined as a plurality of

individuals interacting with each other according to shared cultural norms and meanings” (Azaola, 2012).

Parsons developed system theory and the system is identified as having four different functions; namely, goal attainment, adaptation, integration and latency. These main functions are referred to as AGIL, which represents the basic functions that should be performed by all social systems if they are to continue. Organisations confront the problems of adapting the social system to the social environment and physical environments and acquiring the required resources. Goal attainment is related to the problem of goal setting and goal implementation. In terms of integration, there is the internal problem of maintaining satisfactory relationships among members and avoiding disruptive conflicts. Finally, latency is related to the problem of preserving and creating a distinguishing culture and the values of the system (Badia, 2016). The work of Parsons received a lot of interest in the 1980s and the formation of less hierarchical organisations led to the rise of a new wave in social system theory. Buckley recognised the concepts of social system theory and applied social system theory in sociology for the first time. He emphasised that social system theory is more than just a theory: it is a theoretical framework and methodological tool that should be applied to different fields of study (Greenfield, 2011).

Luhman was another important social theorist of the twentieth century in Europe. He promoted the concept that every individual with social contact is regarded as a social system and that society is included in this in all possible ways. He accepted the ideas of Parsons and contributed to making system theory anew (McMahon & Patton, 2018). The system maintains and constitutes the creation of a different environment where its boundaries are used for regulating differences. These differences are further considered to be important for self-reference. Functional orientation was found to exist in the system by Luhmann. Modern society, for Luhmann, consisted of huge interrelationships between religion, law, economics and science (Elder-Vass, 2015). Hence, functional differentiation is the principle that guides differentiation in society.

### **2.11.3 Application of social system theory in education**

Various studies and researchers have adopted social system theory when conducting research related to education and schools. Azaola (2012) considered a school to be a social system in which more than two people work together in a harmonised manner to achieve predetermined

goals. The assumptions made by different researchers about the social system were brought together by Azaola (2012) and incorporated in the formation of educational settings in society. A social system is thought to be structural, normative, peopled, sanction-bearing, open system and political. The four subsystems; namely, the structural system, cultural system, political system and individual system, are involved in the process of transformation (Levinson et al., 2011). This theory considers a school's different aspects and views the organisation as being full of social beings. Schools are different in comparison with other organisations as they are more public service oriented. This is why this theory provides a suitable background and rationale for research related to education.

In a study carried out by Gordon (2018), social system theory was used as a predictor of change within an educational institution in order that the adoption of innovations in classrooms could be studied. The findings showed that, in order to adopt educational innovations, the system should modify its operational procedures. This signifies that the division of the educational system into subdivisions is important when it comes to adopting innovations in the classroom and modifying the regular operational procedures involved in providing education.

Social system theory can be adopted as a framework for encouraging the active collaboration of a group in order to achieve mutual objectives. Kearney et al. (2016) argued that educational institutions should adopt social system theory as an effective approach by which to reduce or minimise violence within the school environment. The evaluation of system theory within the school arena is a critical component of enhancing the process of change at both school and policy level. Social system theory is moreover considered to be a vital model of evaluation in the school environment (Bozkus, 2014). The adoption of social system theory in school organisations enables teachers and students to develop social thinking through educational settings.

In this research, teachers' perceptions of the school environment and its impact on students' performance will be discussed through the use of social system theory. This is supported by the work of Mee thien and Abd Razak (2012), which highlighted that the application of social system theory is important in the field of education, as it enables stakeholders to understand and analyse the role of schools in a broader context. Germain (2015) argued that the application of social system theory not only helps to develop rational thinking among students, but that it also provides researchers with a better understanding of both specific and unique perspectives

on society. Such perspectives help researchers to gain an understanding of the complex system that schools are comprised of.

Scheerens (2015) claimed that the implementation of social system theory in schools drives students and teachers towards a better decision making process, thus enabling them to improve their learning procedures and to make necessary predictions about the societal learning activities that are likely to improve their quality of living. On the other hand, Webster-Wright (2017) argued that the social system theory approach in the field of education plays a vital role in transforming the trends within education in order to enhance sustainable development. Gajardo and Grau (2019) conducted a study of the social network perspective in relation to teachers' and students' learning activities. It highlighted that building a network of social relationships among teachers in an institution increases an individual's understanding of collaboration, while also contributing to the learning ability of students and the teaching practices of teachers. It also found that social system theory, as a result of the process of building relationships among teachers, leads to the development of a positive cognitive ability among students that allows their learning abilities to develop. However, this finding was in opposition to the findings of Abdu-Raheem (2015) on general system theory, which highlighted that despite the fact that social system theory has the potential to drive an individual towards innovative activities, its relevance to the learning process of an individual has not been explored in the field of education.

In social system theory, more emphasis is placed on the enhancement of social relationships, thus ignoring the physical aspects. Moreover, too much emphasis on social aspects can disrupt the individual perspectives of children in the field of education (Tropeano, 2015). Social system theory encourages a constant focus on the group behaviour of teachers who are qualified for secondary level teaching rather than a focus on the personal perspectives of an individual. However, Badri et al. (2016) argued that the dynamics of social system theory need to be carefully examined in the field of education as such a theory is likely to be misused and to be misinterpreted in terms of its objectives and outcomes. Challenges arise within the education system when people exploit the autonomy of cooperation for personal gain. Therefore, system theory is a crucial factor in the field of education that needs to be properly recognised and analysed if it is to be successfully implemented in educational institutions. Phillips (2008) stated that the education level of the teachers within social system theory could be raised by increasing awareness with regard to the interactions between the system and the teachers'

perspectives on education. The focus on teachers' perspectives by educational institutions through social system theory facilitates the appropriate allocation of teachers in schools and the development of a better understanding of the system process.

The application of social system theory in a different sub-system of education has also been explained by researchers. Levinson et al. (2011) argue that social system theory includes school education as it is an important subsystem of modern society. Furthermore, it has been argued that the contribution of the theory is significant in the field of education, even though it does not fully harmonise with sociological perspectives (Adams et al., 2013). Social system theory has been applied to studies of student perceptions of feedback and assessment in an Intensive English Program. Social system theory has also been used for studies seeking to gain a unique perspective and to develop specific concepts that further facilitate the development of new understandings related to the complex system of the school. In addition to social system theory, general system theory has also been used to analyse and understand the functioning of schools and the context in which they function (Bozkus, 2014).

Social system theory has been chosen in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this study. Social system theory is frequently used in the study of school systems and the model of social system theory is one of the most realistic models that can be used in the study of schools. The utilisation of social system theory in this research helped the researcher to gain a unique perspective and also facilitated the development of specific concepts, which further enabled the researcher to develop new understandings related to the school system.

#### **2.11.4 Application of social system theory in this study**

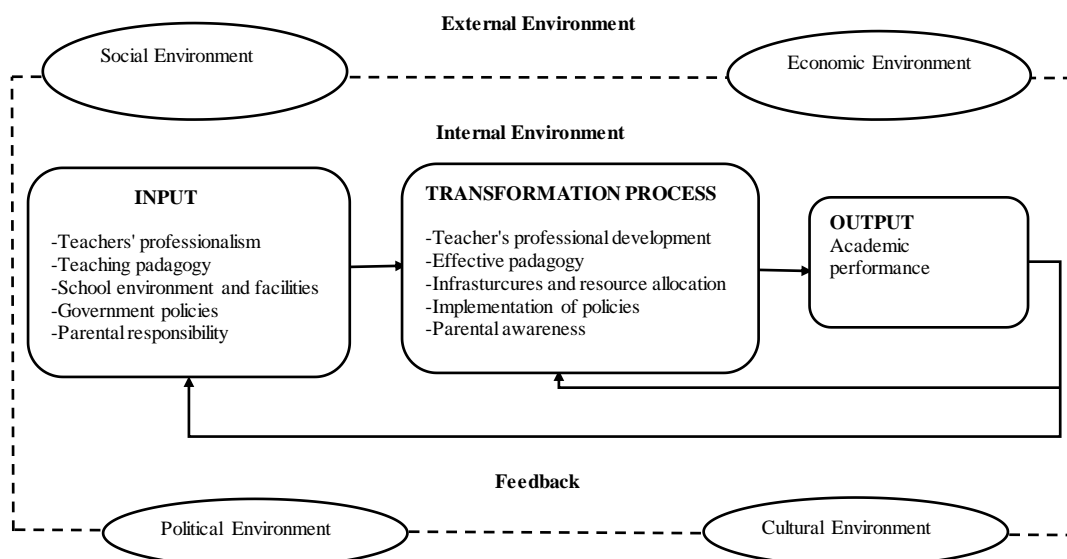
Social system theory is used to explain human behaviour as being comprised of an assembly of the stimuli of numerous interrelated systems. According to social system theory, every system is interconnected and shares a methodical core; thus, each subsystem has an impact on the other (Azaola, 2012). Social system theory is suitable for this research study because, in social system theory, the elements of each system are placed into their environments and the relationships between them are examined. This theory will help the researcher to examine the education sector within the social system of Nepal. Social system theory is a suitable model for this study because the education system in Nepal is broad and both traditional and modern methods of education have been adopted. Thus, through the principles of system theory, an evaluation of societal interactions in the education sector can be carried out.

The Nepalese education system has experienced a change in its traditional operation, despite there being limited funds and resources available (Regmi, 2017). However, it remains in a phase of transition. Thus, in this regard, system theory considers education as being a social system and is interested in discovering and understanding the nature and characteristics of the educational system's functions. It will help in defining the characteristics of schools and their interconnections at different levels. Social system theory suggests, with regard to the identification of social transformation and building of relationships among individuals and society, that the interaction between teachers and students lead to the development of a better education system in which students can learn effectively (Haye et al., 2018). Thus, through the use of social system theory, a relatively complete picture of the Nepalese education system can be studied and the different processes involved in the teaching and learning activities implemented in educational institutions can be observed. With regard to the aims and objectives of this thesis, social system theory can be used to map the interrelationships and interdependencies among different measures of educational systems.

In the education system, each component is characterised by a unique set of elements that are organised in a unique collection of relationships. The principles of social system theory are defined through the open and closed system (Halperin, 2017). Schools are generally regarded as an open system and hierarchy, homeostasis and purposiveness are formed through the use of social system theory, which enables the researcher to identify the complexities in the system through the process of specialisation. In the majority of Nepal's schools, the traditional system of education is still implemented: this is one in which excessive emphasis is placed on teachers, thus reducing the inventive capabilities of students (Parajuli & Wagley, 2010). Exposure to education is limited and, through the use of system theory, perspectives on educational trends in Nepal can be studied as a whole. In other words, in social system theory, more concern is placed on the participative style of integration. However, schools as open systems are highly concerned with the relationships and interactions between people, rather than focussing on teaching and learning activities. This presents a challenge in terms of the effective implementation of social system theory. Furthermore, schools are established with a restricted set of objectives and different education sectors in Nepal may have different objectives. Thus, challenges may arise in terms of incorporating all of the traditional and new elements of education, as system theory does not handle such complexities.

In terms of the analysis of the education system in Nepal, social system theory is used because it presents a holistic view of a system within a particular environment and is implemented in situations where numerous systems are united and have an impact on one another (Halperin, 2017). The applications of social system theory have a great influence on this research study as it allows for a contextual understanding of educational behaviour and activities to be established. When an individual is greatly influenced by their family and school environment, then the actions of the individual also tend to be similar to the way s/he interacts with others at school or home. In this regard, by using social system theory, interventions can be developed, such as providing additional academic support, informing the family of the current situation, and so on (Tight, 2015). Here, the use of social system theory could enable the researcher to gain a unique perspective on education in a developing nation like Nepal. It could also facilitate the development of specific concepts that will enable researchers to develop new understandings relevant to the complex system of the school. In addition, challenges arise in the education system when people exploit the autonomy of cooperation for personal benefit. Therefore, social system theory is a significant approach that needs to be properly recognised and analysed if it is to be successfully implemented in educational institutions. This research will fill this gap in knowledge by testing social system theory using empirical evidence from Nepal.

Figure 1. 5: *System theory and its relationships with the teaching and learning process*



Adapted from Hoy and Miskel (2005); Bozkus (2014)



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the methodological approach undertaken in this study and the associated data analysis techniques applied. These were selected by considering the nature of the current research and by focusing on the aims of the study, objectives and research question. A rationale for the mixed methods approach is given, along with information on the study area and population, sampling methods of data collection and analysis and the type of information gathered from participants. Similarly, ethical issues, questionnaire piloting and some feedback are also described.

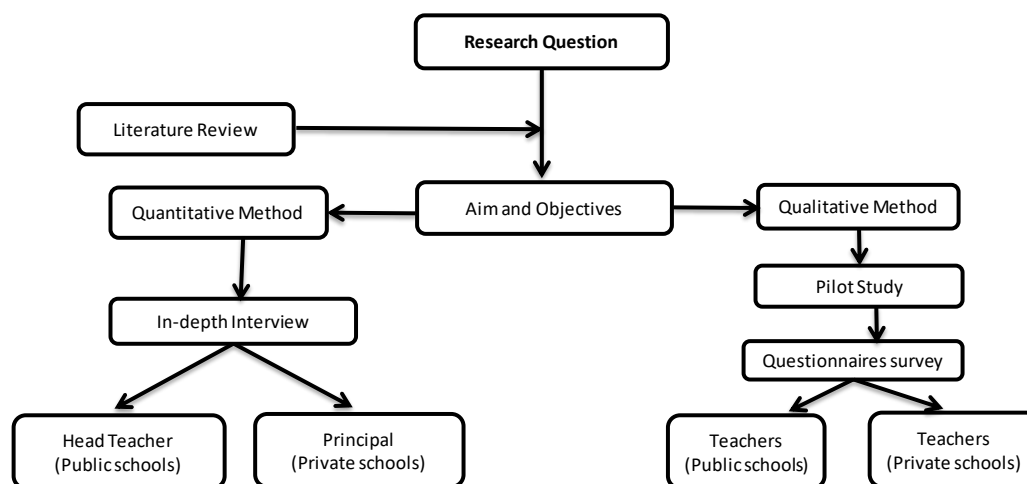
#### **3.2 Research approach**

The research approach can be defined as being the strategies as well as the processes for research (Altricher et al., 2005). In general, there are three types of research approach, i.e, the qualitative research approach, quantitative research approach and mixed method research approach (Creswell, 2009). To carry out this particular research study on the topic of teachers' perceptions of the factors that affect quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic

performance in secondary schools in Nepal, the researcher has undertaken a review of a wide range of literature to gather the secondary sources of data and information. The researcher has also utilised a questionnaire survey and interviews to gather the primary data and information. A mixed method research approach has been used to find the factors connected to the impact of teaching quality on the performance of students in secondary schools in Nepal. Mixed method research approaches combine the fundamentals of both the quantitative and qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2009). In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data are used to assess the theoretical as well as the practical situation of teaching quality.

A mixed method research approach is helpful for the researcher for the reason that it is an analysis comprising the accumulation of both quantitative as well as qualitative data and information (Ritchie et al., 2013). The fundamental expectations of the mixed method research approach are that the blend of the quantitative and the qualitative research approach will succeed in comprehensively addressing the research problem, which one or the other approach might not be able to achieve separately. The mixed method research approach uses enhanced, as well as additional, tools and aids to draw conclusions from what is being researched (Creswell, 2009).

Figure 1. 6: *Research method and process of this study*



Source: Author's representation

In this study, the quantitative data was collected from teachers using self-administered questionnaires and the qualitative data was collected from the head teachers of both public and private schools using in-depth interviews.

### **3.2.1 Quantitative research method**

The quantitative research method emphasises the use of unbiased tools, as well as the numerical, mathematical or statistical investigation of the data collected using opinion polls, questionnaires and surveys or by influencing established numerical data using computational methods. The quantitative research approach emphasises the collection of mathematical data and it is particularly used to provide answers to specific questions about properly defined phenomena (Creswell, 2009).

Regarding the quantitative research approach, data was collected and analysed using organised research tools. Every feature of the study is carefully considered before data is collected (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the researcher has used questionnaire surveys to collect the numerical data. The responses gathered from the survey, which is in the form of numbers as well as statistics, helped the researcher to take a broad view of the concept and to forecast future consequences, as well as to explore the associations between the variables. Furthermore, the researcher also applied in-depth interviews in the qualitative study because a single, generalised approach was not appropriate for investigating the problem in depth. Therefore, the use of the mixed method research approach helped the researcher to overcome the weaknesses of the quantitative research method (Kothari, 2004).

### **3.2.2 Qualitative research method**

In this research, qualitative methods were applied to gather information from the field. Qualitative approaches turned out to be an extremely significant form of inquiry regarding teachers' perceptions of the factors that affect the quality of teaching and its impact on students' performance in secondary schools in Nepal. The qualitative method investigates the why and how of decision-making, not just the what, where and when. Hence, this type of data could be unclear as, although the sample size may be smaller, the volume of data generated is often larger and more time-consuming to analyse (Savin & Major, 2013). It is believed that the combination of data from different approaches ensures the validity of the data. Qualitative data collection methods try to find and explore reality via observation and through digging up

data that is not easily accessible by another method. They also seek to explore rich data by appreciating the subjective nature of social factors (Power, 2002).

Observations, focus group discussions and interviews are the main qualitative methods and the most popular of these is the application of the interview method (Gill et al., 2008). Interviews are one of the most common practices adopted in educational research to collect qualitative data, as talking is the most effective way to explore and exchange ideas in a natural way (Drever, 2003). There are three types of interview used in social research; namely, structured, semi-structured and in-depth interviews.

The researcher used in-depth interviews for this study because this type of interview method can be used to gather factual information as well as preferences and opinions. It can be usefully employed to explore the motivations, experiences and reasoning of the interviewee at a deeper level (Drever, 2003). However, Newby (2010) argues that in-depth interviews in educational research are loosely structured when compared with semi-structured interviews. He also explains that in-depth interviews are better, particularly when exploring feelings and beliefs in order to obtain a rich understanding of the issue in a study. To conduct this research, the researcher visited the various secondary schools operating in the Chitwan district of Nepal and talked to the head teachers as well as teachers involved in the school to inform them about the research study. With the proper consent of the head teachers and teachers, the researcher held interviews regarding the teachers' perceptions of the factors that affect the quality of teaching and its impact on student performance in secondary schools in Nepal.

The in-depth interview has some disadvantages: getting acquainted with interviewees is a time-consuming process, some individuals might not be eager to participate and there are chances that they may provide inaccurate information. However, it is an important procedure by which to explore the beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences of the respondents. In-depth interviews can deeply explore the participants' point of view if the interviewer adopts a conversational style (Creswell, 2009). Here, the interviewer's role is to be a good listener as well. It should be noted that the encounter has to be under the interviewer's control so that the discussion does not depart from the purpose of the study (Ritchie et al., 2013). A mixed method approach was used because it is easy to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem in a generalised way. An additional benefit of using the mixed method approach is the likelihood of triangulation, which permits the researcher to detect the features of an occurrence in a precise

manner by considering different perspectives and using various approaches as well as practices (Maline et al., 2011).

### **3.2.3 Mixed method approach**

According to Johnson et al. (2007), the mixed method approach is a research inquiry that employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed method design is used in this study, which allows for a better understanding and for the problem to be described using both qualitative and quantitative methods, rather a single method approach (Creswell & Clark, 2017). In the mixed method approach, the data from one method contributes to the other for a better understanding of the problem being examined by the research (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Mason (2006) described the mixed method approach by stating that: *“I suggest that a ‘qualitatively driven’ approach to mixing methods offers enormous potential for generating new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experience, and for enhancing our capacities for social explanation and generalisation. Such an approach can draw on and extend some of the best principles of qualitative enquiry. In the process, it can benefit from ways in which qualitative researchers have sought to develop constructivist epistemologies and to engage with thorny methodological issues especially around questions of interpretation and explanation (Mason, 2006, p. 10)”*.

The mixed research method has certain steps that need to be followed. These steps are a determination of the appropriateness of the research design, the rationale for using the mixed design, the selection of a mixed method, data collection, data analysis, validation and the interpretation of the relevant data and information (Zohrabi, 2013). It is useful for understanding teachers’ perceptions of the factors that affect the quality of teaching and its impact on student performance in secondary schools in Nepal.

By using qualitative and quantitative methods, a problem can be resolved in a more generalised way and it is accepted that this increases the generalisability of the results. The mixed method approach produces the complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice. According to Creswell (2009), this is the result of combining both methods; hence, a mixed approach design uses the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address the overall issue and problems. The reliability and credibility of the findings is

increased through the triangulation of the different evidence collected during the research (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010).

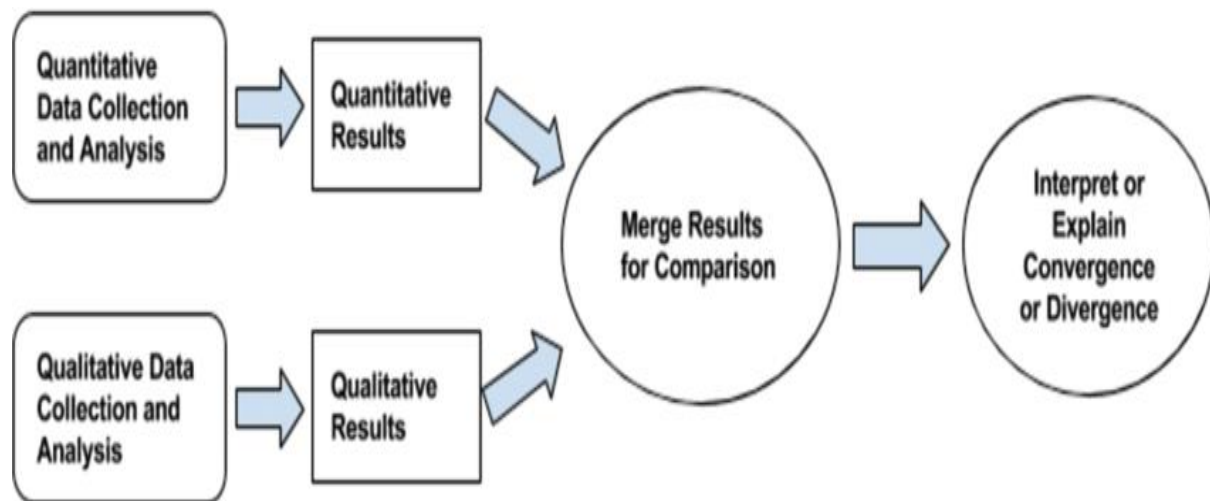
Various types of mixed method research design have been developed for use in research in education. Each design has its own procedures and techniques for conducting research. There are three types of mixed method research design; namely, exploratory sequential design, explanatory sequential design and convergent parallel design.

Explanatory sequential design is a two-phase design in which qualitative and quantitative data are gathered at different times. In this design, quantitative data collection is given priority, as qualitative study depends upon quantitative results (Cameron, 2009). Similarly, exploratory sequential design—also known as instrument development design—is used to generalise qualitative findings. Explanatory sequential design also involves the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data at different times, but the qualitative results support the quantitative study (Kendall, 2017). The researcher applied convergent parallel design to explore the factors that affect teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic performance.

The mixed method design used in this study is based on the convergence research design. The study data was collected via different models of data collection, which, in turn, was conversed and the collected data are complementary (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). The data obtained in the mixed method approach are merged for the reason that one data resource may not turn out to be adequate for the research study. In the convergence method, the strength of both the qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary to each other and a good research result will be obtained (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In convergent design, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected at the same time, but these two data sets are analysed separately. After analysis, the results from each analysis are merged and interpreted. Data integration can be done by different methods, such as by merging both the qualitative and quantitative data or through mutual explanations of both the qualitative and quantitative data. In the convergence parallel method, data is merged and interpreted by combining, explaining, comparing and contrasting the results of the qualitative survey and quantitative interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Figure 1. 7: *Convergent parallel designs*



Source: Subedi (2016)

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data can significantly increase the value of the mixed method research approach: both datasets contribute to each other as their findings can be explained and compared (Creswell & Clark, 2017). There are three levels of integration in mixed methods research, i.e., integration of both qualitative and quantitative data at the design level, integration at the methods level and integration at the interpretation and reporting level. Integration of data at the stage of interpretation and reporting occurs through three approaches, i.e., integrating through narrative, integrating through transformation of data and integrating through joint displays (Stange et al., 2006). The researcher could explain the qualitative and quantitative findings in a single report or a series of reports when integrating qualitative and quantitative data at the interpretation and reporting level. There are also three approaches in the strategy of integration through narrative, i.e., the weaving approach, contiguous approach and staged approach. The weaving approach includes writing by combining both the quantitative and qualitative findings on a topic either by concept, theme or process (Classen et al., 2007).

The researcher integrated data at the interpretation and reporting level. A narrative approach, using the weaving approach, was carried out. Furthermore, the discussion was carried out by merging both the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data and combining, comparing and contrasting these on the basis of theory and the research question of this study. Hence, the convergence parallel method is achieved through mixed methods in this study.

### 3.3 Study area

To conduct this particular research study, one of the most well-known and developed districts of Nepal, i.e., the Chitwan district, was selected by the researcher. The reason for that is that the Chitwan district of Nepal is considered to be one of the fastest developing destinations for the education sector in Nepal (Chitwan profile, 2014). Also, there are adequate infrastructures, such as roads, transportation and schools, among others. Chitwan was selected for the reason that the researcher previously worked in that district for many years and the researcher is very familiar with the academic conditions, as well as the environment, of the Chitwan district.

Chitwan is about 91 miles away from the capital city, Kathmandu. Bharatpur is the District Headquarters of Chitwan and it has recently been declared a sub-metropolitan city by the Nepalese government, because it is one of the fastest growing cities in the country. Chitwan is the fifth largest city and is an emerging destination for higher education, healthcare services and transportation within the region (Chitwan profile, 2014). According to the census report for 2011, the population of Chitwan is 579,984. According to the Flash Report published by DOE (2014), there are 41,959 public schools and 10,477 private schools in Nepal. In terms of the secondary grades, there are 4,715 public schools and 2,213 private schools. The Flash report shows that there are 198 public and private secondary schools operating in the Chitwan district (DOE, 2014). In this study, all of these factors are important for the reason that the researcher is undertaking research to understand the impact of teaching quality on the performance of students in secondary schools. As the Chitwan district is developing quickly, it embraces different teachers and students who have migrated from various other cities, districts and towns; therefore, studying this district enabled the researcher to collect the diverse perceptions of teachers belonging to different economic, educational, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Chitwan was chosen as the research site because of different factors. These include the variety of geographical areas (i.e., both towns and villages), the fact that most of the community was represented, the fact that the district possessed certain facilities and because the district has a diverse community. Similarly, the other reasons were easy access to public and private schools, the researcher's previous experience of working in the area and the fact that this area was the researcher's home. The Chitwan district of Nepal is situated in the central part of Nepal. People from all of the geographical regions of Nepal and from all walks of life have migrated into this area. Furthermore, it was easy to manage time, access the research site and understand the local socio-political situation because this area was the researcher's home. Hence, Chitwan was



chosen as the research site for the reason that the Chitwan district of Nepal contains numerous institutions that are concerned with delivering education to students.

### **3.4 Sampling method and procedure**

A convenience sampling method (i.e., haphazard sampling, accidental sampling and availability sampling) was applied in order to select participants for this study as it is considered to be an easy and cost-effective method. The convenience sampling method is extremely trouble-free to carry out and there is a small set of laws governing the way that such a sample ought to be gathered. In comparison with the probability sampling method, the convenience sample method incurs relatively lower costs as well as time savings. An additional reason for selecting convenience sampling is that it remains extremely beneficial for conducting pilot studies as well as for generating the main data (Etikan, 2016). Furthermore, this method saves time in terms of collecting data, as the researcher has limited time for carrying out fieldwork.

It is expected that the outcome of this research will be helpful in contributing to the debate on education policy in Nepal. Initially, in the pilot phase, the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire (i.e., closed-ended questions), which helps to limit respondents' answers to the survey. The participants were allowed to choose responses from a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Cummins & Gullone, 2000) (Appendix I).

The question for this research study was designed in such a way that it fulfils the objectives of the research study. The participants were asked questions regarding the quality of teachers and asked to respond regarding whether they felt that teaching quality depends on teachers' academic qualifications and pedagogical training and whether this makes them more effective in the classroom. Participants were also required to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that teachers with more experience would have more knowledge of effective practice. The participants were also asked to give their responses regarding whether they felt that teachers' personalities, attitudes and behaviours encouraged students to pay attention in the classroom and whether a good student-teacher relationship is of importance in enhancing the performance of the students. There were also questions relating to policy and implementation, teaching and learning methods and planning and preparation, with participants required to indicate their responses on the Likert scale. It is believed that the quantitative method of data collection ensures a high response rate and accurate sampling, as argued by Oppenheim (2000).

The researcher used two languages in the questionnaire; namely, Nepali as well as English, in order to make the questionnaire understandable to the local teachers. The use of two languages can help participants to understand the questions and to deliver appropriate responses; also, the use of the Likert scale helps the participants to provide information in a shorter amount of time. The researcher also devised in-depth interviews and, for these, the researcher used a simple format in order to ensure that the participants understood the questions easily and would provide in-depth information regarding the questions asked (Appendix II).

The qualitative research method was used to gather data and information for this research study. In qualitative interviews, the emphasis is on the interviewee's point of view. Researchers can ask new questions that follow up on interviewee's replies and can vary the order of questions to help them to collect the information that they want to investigate. As a result, qualitative interviews tend to be flexible and to provide a broader response and more detailed answers (Bryman, 2008).

Before conducting the main interviews required for the research study, the researcher undertook a pilot study, in which interviews were conducted among a few participants as a sample. As per the result of the pilot study, the researcher made certain changes in order to match the Nepalese context to the subject of the research study. Again, this was done by conducting in-depth interviews using the convenience sampling method (Creswell, 2010).

### **3.5 Study population for the main study**

Data was gathered by using quantitative data from both public and private schools. Sample questionnaires were issued to 332 teachers (i.e., the respondents of the study) working at a total of 55 rural and urban schools. While collecting the data, the researcher maintained ethical practices regarding respondents' consent, their independence and confidentiality. 55 schools were selected from a total of 198 schools for the reason that they would be the source of primary data for the researcher in this research study. The schools that were selected for the pilot study were also included in the main study, as the responses obtained from the pilot study were helpful for the main study. There was complete participation from the selected respondents in the sample schools and all the respondents answered every question in the questionnaire. This was because any confusing questions had been eliminated after the pilot study.

In order to select the schools, a formal letter was sent to the head teachers of 198 schools, asking them to provide at least five teachers from their schools to take part in the research. Fifty-five schools were selected after this. The selection was also based on the early responses of the head teachers and the availability of participants. Amongst the 55 schools, at least five male/female teachers were asked to participate voluntarily if they had completed 25 years of service at the school. This cut-off point was implemented because teachers have to complete graduate-level study, i.e., a B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education), or to have completed equivalent teaching practice and training before he/she can apply for the post of a secondary school teacher. The sample taken from each school was not less than five participants (i.e., secondary teachers). It is believed that this limit on the number of participants from each school is crucial in maintaining similarities of the data in order to meet research standards (Sale et al., 2002).

This mixed method approach was chosen for the reason that it would be extremely easy for the researcher to gather the data and information essential for the research study in an area that was densely occupied by students from diverse backgrounds and with different characteristics. Additionally, the area was well known to the researcher and enabled him to complete the research within the specified time period. Additionally, limiting the number of participants allowed the researcher to spend additional time with the participants that helped understand in detail, as well as to acquire in-depth understanding and responses regarding the topic under study. This makes the findings of the study more valid and appropriate. For the convenience of the respondents, the questionnaire was translated into the respondents' native language. It was handed to the participating teachers in their schools and collected after a week.

Secondary school teachers were chosen for this study because there is a national policy for the measurement of the performance of students at senior school level called the School Leaving Certificate (SLC). This study would only be possible if the perceptions of teachers were studied. Hence, secondary school teachers and head teachers were the focal points of this study, so that their perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on the performance of the students in secondary schools in Nepal could be analysed. Moreover, the researcher's previous experience and involvement in secondary level education made him more confident in conducting and designing research on secondary education with the aim of evaluating students' academic performance.

Qualitative methods of data analysis aim to gather an in-depth understanding of the factors (Gill et al., 2008) that are related to teaching quality; that is, things that affect students'

performance. In-depth interview schedules were devised to collect data by applying the qualitative method. The questions for the interview were devised according to the objectives of the research study. The questions for the interview were set with the intention of exploring teachers' perceptions of the impact of teachers' academic qualifications on students' academic performance and exploring teachers' perceptions of other important factors and their impact on the academic performance of students. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 16 head teachers from both public and private schools in the Chitwan district. A total of 30 formal letters were sent to the head teachers asking them to take part in the research and requesting an interview (Appendix III). The head teachers from urban and rural areas were selected for interview by their early responses and availability. Out of the 16 head teachers, nine were selected from public schools and seven were selected from private schools in both urban and rural areas within the research site. A pilot study can be defined as being a small-scale, initial study that examines whether a vital element of a key study, typically a randomised measured sample, will be possible (Denscombe, 2014). In this regard, the researcher pre-tested the questionnaire by interviewing a few sample participants during the pilot study.

### **3.6 Quantitative data management and analysis**

When analysing the quantitative data, each questionnaire was given a unique number and the data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences). The accuracy of the data entry was ensured through the double checking carried out by the researcher. The five levels of the Likert scale were used in the questionnaires, i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree, and all these levels were given a rating of 1-5. Additionally, the Likert scale also helped the researcher to analyse the data efficiently. The researcher used a statistical test, i.e., the Mann-Whitney U Test, to analyse the quantitative data using SPSS. A frequency table, bar graphs and pie chart were used to present the data and information in a clear manner.

### **3.7 Qualitative data coding and analysis**

The researcher conducted all the interviews with participants, which were recorded digitally. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the language of the interviewees, i.e., Nepali. Furthermore, all of the recorded oral interviews were transcribed and translated into English and evaluated applying a thematic approach. Themes can be created in two ways, i.e., inductively—directly from raw data—and deductively—from

previous research or on the basis of theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive thematic approach was used to identify patterns across the data and to draw themes from the collected qualitative data. These themes were developed according to the aims and objectives of the study in order to address the research questions (Pope et al., 2006). The themes were created from the transcribed data using manual coding and Nvivo software, and then interpreted and analysed accordingly, as this study used two diverse yet complementary approaches. Both methods allowed for the opinions of the respondents to be divided into different categories and Nvivo software also helped to categorise the data. Nvivo software simplifies the investigation of qualitative data (Wong, 2008). The use of a computer software package helped the researcher to manage the data and information by organising numerous data sources, which consisted of interviews, records, surveys, etc. It also helped the researcher to manage ideas and to comprehend the theoretical as well as hypothetical problems produced throughout the research study. Likewise, the software also helped the researcher to create associations among the conceptual and theoretical data. In addition, the use of a computer software package meant that there was a reduction in the number of manual tasks, which benefited the researcher by enabling him to acquire additional time to discover tendencies, recognise themes and derive conclusions (Wong, 2008).

Conventional coding was done manually by hand, utilising coloured pens to sort and then cut and categorise data (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). For example, highlighters were used to emphasise the main data collected by the researcher that was related to the topic. Furthermore, a different colour was coded for each interviewee and for creating the themes in relation to the research question that were covered by the aims and objectives (Appendix 10). Teacher's professionalism, pedagogical training and resources were taken as variables. Similarly, government policy and implementation, the school environment and facilities, parental responsibilities and other socio-cultural factors were considered as objectives for the study, whose aim was to explore teachers' perceptions in relation to the effect of the quality of teaching on students' performance.

The difference in the frequencies relating to each theme resulted from coding using both the manual approach and by the help of Nvivo. Themes were developed by comparing, contrasting as well as identifying and definitive issues as convergence method suggested. Furthermore, list containing overlapping and most frequently cited response was compiled. Finally, themes were generated where two perspectives endorsed a triangulation of the data and the validation of the

emerging significant themes. Furthermore, all the transcribed and translated interviews were brought together according to the themes created and the data was analysed under each theme (Dawborn-Gundlach & Pesina, 2015). Here, the main concerns, ideas and views were grouped again into each of the highlighted sub-topics. Both the similar and most matched opinions, views, ideas and experiences were prioritised and analysed.

Before using the Nvivo software, the researcher obtained a thorough knowledge and the skills needed for applying this software to the analysis of data. The researcher took part in some workshops, training and seminars that taught him about the application of, and techniques involved in, using Nvivo software. Hence, the methodology undertaken in this project was both quantitative and qualitative (i.e., mixed method) in nature and was solely done by the researcher.

### **3.8 Validity and reliability**

Validity can be used in research as a tool by which to ensure the quality and accuracy of data and the findings (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Research validity can be confirmed by both the internal and external validity method. Internal validity provides the researcher with a degree of confidence by drawing conclusions from the study's variables on the basis of the principle of cause and effect (Dawson, 2013). In comparison, external validity denotes the generalisation of study outcomes to the time, setting and population (Collins, 2010).

Reliability in research refers to how the proposed study by the current researcher will carry out the same research using the identical methods as former studies, but in a different time period (Thomas, 2013). The main aspect of reliability in quantitative results is its measurement of consistency, which is verified through statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2015). In a qualitative study, reliability relies on theoretical presumptions with regard to the word patterns used to generate meaning (Dennis et al., 2013).

The qualitative approach regards humans as societal factors that cannot be separated from society. It simultaneously defines that behaviours and attitudes are the changing phenomena of humans; thus, as the environment is rapidly changing it is hard to maintain the reliability of qualitative studies (Dennis et al., 2013). Therefore, the researcher has to find out the consistency of the study in order to generate reliability by using the qualitative study, rather than by generating former findings again and again. To enhance the quality of the data, the

researcher should adopt low-inference descriptions that ensure that the acquisition of observations is as stable as possible (Easton, 2010).

### **3.8.1 Validity and reliability of the quantitative survey**

In this study, steps were undertaken to confirm both reliability and validity, which are as follows. The research topic was determined following considerable study of the existing literature. Likewise, the interviews and survey questions were developed with thoughtful consideration following extensive study of literature related to the topic under study. During the questionnaire design, some factors that were tested and verified in previous research were also included in this research. Some additional questionnaires were prepared during the research related to the study. These questionnaires were tested and verified by the pilot study before the researcher conducted the main survey study in order to ensure reliability. After acquiring feedback and suggestions from teachers and senior research students at the University of Abertay on issues relating to readability and comprehensiveness, the prepared questionnaires were altered. This sort of activity enhances the instrument's reliability.

Likewise, all the respondents were informed that the information and facts that they shared would be kept confidential and that anonymity would be preserved. This was done to obtain honest and reliable answers from the respondents. There is a high probability that the researcher will maximise the validity of the questionnaire if they gather honest and accurate information.

### **3.8.2 Validity and reliability of the qualitative instrument**

After selecting the group of respondents from the schools, pilot interviews were carried out to test the interview questionnaire and gather responses regarding the issues being researched. This enabled the researcher to identify whether the questions were easy to understand or whether they frustrated the chosen respondents. The researcher aimed to ensure consistency and in order to achieve this, he asked the questions in a simple way. Appropriate sentences and words were used while asking the questions so that respondents did not get offended.

After all this, the researcher asked respondents politely about whether any questions were vague or unclear. On the basis of the feedback from the pilot interview, certain questions were

amended, which helped the researcher to collect reliable and valid data from the respondents. In a nutshell, the research has made use of all possible measures for ensuring the validity and reliability of the study.

### **3.9 Ethical issues**

Ethical issues in research refer to the norms for conducting the research process, which are defined by a code of conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The fundamental principal of research ethics is to carry out research work without causing any type of harm to the individual participant. It is crucial to ensure that the whole process of research is done with a nominal amount of risk (Stringer, 2008; Bryman, 2012). In this research project, measures were taken to maintain trust and confidentiality, and the prevention of harm or deception, by gaining the consent of the research participants (Resnik, 2010). Before conducting the questionnaire survey, every participant was informed about the objectives of the research study and, after the appropriate permission was given, the respondents then completed the questionnaire survey. Participants who showed an eagerness to participate in the survey were given instructions regarding how to fill in the form. The participants were also provided with the authority to step back from the survey if they didn't feel like participating. In terms of ethical factors, issues associated with confidentiality may arise while recording private information from participants. Therefore, Special attention was paid to ensuring that the researcher followed guidelines and respected participants' dignity regarding the protection of their sensitive and private information while recording or collecting their data. The collected data was stored securely. In addition, the researcher ensured that the data and information provided by the participants were not misused and that they were properly disposed of after the completion of the research study.

Research procedures include long-term involvement, in-depth knowledge about the issues under study and a full description of the whole process (Stringer, 2008). Through this process, a researcher can maintain a good relationship with participants that makes it easy to carry out research. Therefore, it is important to ensure that any information provided is observed, accessed and described clearly and honestly. The researcher carried out data collection by maintaining the level of trustworthiness in this study. In this respect, questionnaires were handed to the teachers and collected instantly where possible. Some of the teachers wanted to return the questionnaires after a couple of days and they returned the questionnaires to the school's head teacher once they were finished. The head teacher stored the collected data



carefully, confidentially and securely, which minimised the possible harm to the participants that could be caused by the research (Bryman, 2012). The ethical procedure makes responsible to the researcher as well as it gives guidelines about how to conduct the research. It helps to establish the moral and legal justification for the research. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) has stated that “*autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice*” are important for any research (Ethical Guidelines of Educational Association, 2011).

The teacher participants, head teachers of the participating schools and other related personnel were informed of the date and time of interview so that the participants were prepared in advance. Similarly, all the participants were aware of the medium in which the outcome of the research would be reported. This research study was conducted as part of a thesis for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. For this purpose, an ethical approval form was submitted to the School of Social and Health Sciences, University of Abertay. As a result, the researcher received ethical approval from the School of Social and Health Sciences’ Ethical Approval committee (Appendix 9). The Government of Nepal’s Education Department also issued an ethical approval letter to support the researcher (Appendices 4 & 5). Similarly, the researcher received an approval letter from the Chitwan District Education Office to collect data from the field (Appendix 6). Before starting both types of interviews (i.e., self-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews), written consent was obtained from all the interviewees. They were offered clarification on the objectives of the research and their role and were given other necessary information, such as about their right to participate and to respond or not (Appendix 7). The confidentiality and anonymity of the data was protected. The data obtained from participants were used only for this study and destroyed after the study was completed.

### **3.10 Support, permissions and agreements**

As the research was conducted in Nepal, it required complete support from the individuals and organisations concerned. All the individuals, including principals and teachers in both private and public schools within the study area, were contacted in advance and informed about the nature of the study, which was helpful to the researcher in terms of carrying out the research successfully. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and District Education Office were taken into consideration as a means of gathering secondary data.

Every individual and agency was contacted for permission and asked for their agreement for the research to be conducted. The Ministry of Education was contacted and a request made to

grant ethical approval; this was repeated for the District Education Offices. Similarly, all the policy makers, principals and teachers were contacted and given letters requesting permission to collect data from schools (Berg, 2004).

### **3.11 Pilot study**

It is believed that although pilot studies can be costly, they can save costs and time by the end of the study (Oppenheim, 1992). The main purpose is to test the instruments by focussing on finding out their appropriateness, as well as to obtain clarity and determine the length of time needed to complete the questionnaires for data collection (Bowling, 2005). Hence, in this particular study, the tested questionnaires were edited as per the feedback and suggestions gathered regarding the research question. Unsuitable questions were omitted and improvements to the questions were made after testing. After piloting the questionnaires, the researcher found some evidence of acquiescent bias and extreme response bias as the researcher had phrased all of the statements in positive terms. To reduce those biases, the researcher designed alternative statements (i.e., reversed statements) that mixed positive and negative wording, as current research papers suggest that this method reduces bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

#### **3.11.1 Sample population and method**

The questionnaire was tested among 33 secondary public school teachers in two different districts in Nepal by using convenience (i.e., availability) sampling as questionnaire piloting. The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the participants and collected after one week by the researcher. The questionnaire was focused on the objectives of the research study (Creswell et al., 2011). The questionnaire was set in such a way that it met the objectives of the research study, which assisted in investigating teachers' perceptions of pedagogical training and its impact on students' academic performance and exploring teachers' perceptions of the impact of effective teaching methods on students' academic performance, etc. The different variables, i.e., the educational qualifications of teachers, the gender of participants, the age of teachers, the teaching experience of respondents and appointment status of teachers (i.e., permanent teachers versus non-permanent teachers) were tested by this questionnaire piloting. This resulted in valuable feedback and comments being gathered from participants in response to the research and questionnaires during the initial fieldwork. The researcher also gathered valuable information from the field about current trends, educational status and teachers'

satisfaction levels. It afforded the researcher an opportunity to make connections and to communicate with the respondents about topics related to the main study.

### 3.11.2 Pilot study analysis and results

A pilot study is carried out to forecast a suitable size for the sample as well as to enhance some features of the study design (Newby, 2010). The summary of the findings, which applied the independent t-test to data and the level of significance, was set at the 5% confidence interval ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The findings of the pilot study indicated some significant results for different variables. The different variables are the educational qualifications of teachers, gender of participants, age of teachers, teaching experience of respondents and the appointment status of teachers. The results are presented below. The analysis of the teachers' educational qualifications, such as BA versus MA, led to significant differences in some statements.

Table 1. 1: Statements 20 & 25 Questionnaire piloting (BA vs. MA)

Q. N.	Statements	P value
20.	Quality education depends on the curriculum and pedagogical strategy	0.002
25.	The classroom environment and facilities promote students' interest in teaching and learning	0.016

In response to these statements, participants with a BA stated significantly less agreement compared with participants with an MA. According to the findings of the data, which was analysed by considering gender (i.e., male vs. female), there were significant differences in three statements.

Table 1. 2: Statements 14, 19 & 25 Questionnaire piloting (male vs. female)

<b>Q. N.</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>P value</b>
<b>14.</b>	I allow students to begin homework/group work in class with peer assistance	0.008
<b>19.</b>	In a small class (less than 40 students in a classroom), there is a close relationship between teacher and students	0.04
<b>25.</b>	A favourable classroom environment and facilities promote students' interest in teaching and learning	0.014

In all cases, i.e., Q14, Q19 and Q25, males had a significantly lower agreement with the statements mentioned above. In response to two statements, i.e., Q9 and Q28, males had a lower level of agreement with the statements. There were two interesting results in this specific data analysis. In response to statements Q2 and Q22, all the female participants gave the rating 1 to both statements, which meant they strongly agreed with these statements.

Table 1. 3: Statements 1 & 16 Questionnaire piloting (permanent vs. non-permanent)

<b>Q. N.</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>P value</b>
<b>1.</b>	Teaching quality depends on the teachers' academic qualifications	0.038
<b>16.</b>	Students get better grades in classes where students get individual support from the teacher	0.031

Analysing the data by the type of contract held by the subject (i.e., permanent and non-permanent) led to significant differences in two questions. In both cases, those with a non-permanent contract had a significantly lower level of agreement with the statements in these questions.

Analysing the data about the age of the participants (i.e., 40 or under and over 40 years old) led to significant differences in two questions.

Table 1. 4: Statements 1 & 28 Questionnaire piloting (under 40 vs. over 40)

Q. N.	Statements	P value
1.	Teaching quality depends on the teachers' academic qualifications	0.001
28.	Students and teachers both feel comfortable in small class sizes for teaching and learning.	0.035

In response to Q1, the older group had a significantly lower agreement with the statement, while, in the case of Q28, the younger group had a significantly lower level of agreement with the statement.

There were three questions where the results were almost significantly different. In Q13 ('Group discussion and presentation enhances students' understanding and helps to create new ideas, concepts, etc'),  $p=0.057$ ; Q25 ('A favourable classroom environment and facilities promote students' interest in teaching and learning'),  $p=0.057$ ; and Q30 ('The availability of library facilities and learning materials are essential for active learning'),  $p=0.09$ , it was noted again that the younger group had a lower level of agreement with the statements.

Analysing the data by the years of teaching experience of the respondents (i.e., less than 15 years and more than 15 years) led to significant differences in five questions.

Table 1. 5: Statements 1, 3, 8, 26 & 32 Questionnaire piloting (experience: 15 years or less vs. over 15 years)

In	Q. N.	Statements	P value
all	1.	Teaching quality depends on the teachers' academic qualifications	0.013
	3.	Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practices	0.045
	8.	The head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance	0.022
	26.	Technology can help improve teachers' performance in the classroom	0.047
	32.	Political stability ensures that schools run smoothly and this creates a better environment to focus on teaching and learning	0.048

cases, the less experienced group had significantly lower levels of agreement with the statements. There were two questions where the results were almost statistically significantly different. For Q18 ('When teachers and students share a good relationship, then they enjoy school more'),  $p=0.087$ , the more experienced group had a lower level of agreement. For Q22 ('Preparation by the teacher (before class) helps them to teach with clearer vision'),  $p=0.056$ , the less experienced group had a lower level of agreement with the statement.

To sum up, after returning from the fieldwork and piloting the questionnaire, the data was analysed using an independent t-test in SPSS. The result of the test showed some significant differences between variables in the responses to the statements as mentioned above. These findings led to a review of the statements and the researcher revised the statements accordingly. The pilot survey was conducted by the researcher to acquire an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on student performance in secondary schools in Nepal. Several questions were asked of the participants regarding in what way they would judge the performance of their schools. The main purpose of the testing instrument (i.e., questionnaire piloting) was to find out the questionnaire's relevance, clarity, appropriateness and the amount of time needed to complete the questionnaire. This informed the creation of a revised questionnaire for the main study and also aided in the construction of an interview schedule. Finally, it enabled the researcher to discover key ideas in terms of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

In the first part of this chapter, the appropriate research approach for conducting research was discussed. This research study adopted a mixed method approach in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied in order to find out about teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic performance. A questionnaire survey was conducted for gathering all the numerical data. Educational research uses the interview method for collecting qualitative data, as it is one of the most effective ways to explore and exchange information in the most natural way. In-depth interviews helped in gathering the teachers' perceptions of quality of teaching and its impact on students' performance. However, the researcher faced challenges in terms of resources in the sense that there were limited funds and time available for conducting the study. Despite these challenges, the researcher invested his full efforts into making the study more accurate, such as making a time schedule for each and every activity for time management, controlling internal and external variables and using his own funds when needed.

In order to carry out the research work, an appropriate study area had to be selected. This research was conducted in the Chitwan district of Nepal, which has a variety of geographical areas and all types of schools. The researcher selected Chitwan as this district is the fastest developing destination for the educational sector in Nepal. The infrastructures, along with the facilities in the district, are developing rapidly. This district was selected as the research destination because the Chitwan district of Nepal is home to numerous institutions that are concerned with delivering quality education to students in diversified populations. The convenience sampling method was used in this research. This method was used for selecting the participants of the study as it is considered an easy and cost-effective method. Among the 198 schools in Chitwan, 55 schools were selected as the main sources for data collection. While conducting this research work, the researcher has followed all the relevant rules and codes of conduct.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the findings and analysis of the quantitative data (i.e., self-administered questionnaire surveys). It includes the demographic information and other characteristics of the respondents. In addition, it also includes the findings and analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding professionalism, pedagogical training, the school environment and facilities, government policy and practice, parental responsibilities and other socio-economic factors.

#### **4.2 Demographic information and other characteristics of respondents**

This section describes the basic demographic information and other characteristics of the respondents. This chapter presents information pertaining to school location and types, plus the age, gender, academic qualifications, work experience, job status and training status of respondents. These are factors that determine the personal and social status of the respondents. The influence of these characteristics is also considered with respect to the participants' responses to the survey questions.

Both types of schools, i.e., public and private, have been included in order to collect data to find out teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance. According to the collected data, it was found that half of the respondents (50.09%) were from public schools and the remainder were from private schools. Similarly, teaching and learning processes were also dependent on where the schools were located. The study gathered information from respondents from different locations, i.e., both urban and rural areas. Out of a total of 332 respondents, 164 (49.4%) respondents were from schools located in urban areas, while 168 (50.6%) respondents were from schools located in rural areas.

This study had participants drawn from a range of ages. Almost three quarters of the subjects were aged less than 45 years old.



Table 1. 6: *Age of respondents*

Age Group	Number of Participants	Percentage
25 years-34 years	116	34.9%
35 years-44 years	120	36.1%
45 years-54 years	79	23.8%
55 years and over	17	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 7 shows the gender of the respondents. In this study, there were fewer female respondents than male respondents. As shown in the table below, there were few female teachers (13.6%) and the percentage of male teachers was 86.4%, which shows that there is a low representation of female teachers.

Table 1. 7: *Gender of respondents*

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage
Male	287	86.4%
Female	45	13.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>100%</b>

Teachers' academic qualifications play a crucial role in improving the quality of education. This study attempted to collect information about the educational background and highest academic degree achieved by respondents. All the respondents (i.e., teachers) were educated to at least bachelor's degree level; however, more than half had a master's degree, which means that qualifications have a greater impact on the quality of teaching.

Table 1. 8: *Level of academic degree held by respondents*

Qualification	Number of Participants	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	162	48.8%
Master's Degree	166	50.0%
PhD/Other	4	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>100%</b>

To find out about teachers' perceptions of the relationship between teaching quality and teaching experience, teaching experience was taken as one of the variables in order to examine whether or not teaching experience could contribute to students' academic performance.

Information was collected about the teaching experience that respondents had gained so far. A quarter of the respondents had more than 20 years' experience of teaching.

Table 1. 9: *Teaching experience of respondents*

Teaching Experience	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>10 years or less</b>	121	36.4%
<b>11 years-20 years</b>	123	37.0%
<b>Over 20 years</b>	88	26.5%
<b>Total</b>	332	100%

The appointment status of the respondents was also examined in this study. The study found that only 128 (38.6%) respondents had a permanent job as a teacher, whereas 204 (61.4%) respondents were working as non-permanent teaching staff. This means that most of the teachers working in private schools are non-permanent teachers because of the poor rules and legislation of the governing body. Some teachers in public schools are non-permanent; they are appointed and paid using local resources (MOE, 2015).

Information about the teacher training received by respondents was also collected in this study, because there is a belief that completing certified teacher training could help teachers to teach in a clearer manner that would benefit students. According to government records, more than 98% of teachers in public schools are trained. However, fewer numbers of trained teachers teach in private schools. In this study, out of a total of 332 respondents, 277 (83.4%) respondents from both public and private schools had received teacher training. They believed that pedagogical training enhances the efficiency of teachers, which leads to the improvement of students' knowledge and skills.

The demographic and other characteristics of respondents showed that the majority of the respondents belonged to the 35 to 44 years old age group. The survey welcomed participation from both males as well as females; however, the majority of respondents were found to be male. The respondents who participated in the survey were educated and had good academic qualifications, i.e., bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees, and half of the respondents were educated to master's level. Likewise, the majority of the participants who took part in the survey had 11 to 20 years of teaching experience.

### 4.3 Quality of teachers and students' performance

This section examines the respondents' views about the quality of the teacher. The teachers' academic qualifications, pedagogical training and refreshment programmes were examined from the teachers' perspectives. Teaching experience is also considered in this section.

In this study, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the differences between two independent groups where the variables are not normally distributed. To find out the teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its relationship with students' academic performance, the Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to compare the variables. When the groups were compared, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test led to statistically significant differences in some areas.

#### 4.3.1 Teachers' academic qualifications

Data was collected to find out about teachers' perceptions of whether teachers' academic qualifications made a difference to the effectiveness of teaching. As the table below shows, most of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement that the quality of teachers does not depend on academic qualifications (39.5% and 27.7% respectively). Very few people responded that this statement was true (31.9%), which means that the quality of teaching depends on academic qualifications.

Table 1. 10: Statement 1- 'Teaching quality does not depend on teachers' academic qualifications.

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	22	6.6%
<b>Agree</b>	84	25.3%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	3	0.9%
<b>Disagree</b>	131	39.5%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	92	27.7%

To understand teachers' perspectives of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance in Nepal, the responses to the open-ended question at the end of the survey were examined. Some of the respondents stated that teachers' academic qualifications are the crucial factor that contributes to quality of teaching, but they also mentioned that training, experience and government policies are also part of it. For example, one of the teachers (R319) stated that:

*“In my view, teaching quality depends on teachers’ academic qualifications, training, experience, government policies, their implementation, etc. However, we teachers in Nepal are quite backwards due to many reasons, i.e., the political situation and interference, socio-economic diversity and geographical difficulties.”*

The respondents indicated that, in their opinion, political, socio-economic, cultural and geographical difficulties also affect the quality of education.

The impact of the respondents’ employment contract status on teaching quality and its impact on students’ performance was subjected to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test.

Table 1. 11: *Mann-Whitney U Test (permanent vs non-permanent)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Permanent</b>	128	183.65	23507.50	10860.500	.007**
<b>Non-permanent</b>	204	155.74	31770.50		

The result showed a significantly different strength of agreement between non-permanent teachers when compared to those recruited as permanent teachers. According to the findings, permanent teachers were significantly less likely (a total of 128) and non-permanent teachers were more likely (a total of 204) to agree with the statement that ‘Teaching quality is not dependent on teachers’ academic qualifications’ (U= 10860.500, P= .007).

In order to find the relationship between the variables, the teacher survey results were subjected to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test. This non-parametric statistical technique exposed a significantly different strength of agreement between untrained teachers and trained teachers, that is, those that hold a certificate in teaching practice.

Table 1. 12: *Mann-Whitney U Test (trained vs. untrained)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Trained</b>	277	172.18	47693.00	6045.000	.011**
<b>Untrained</b>	55	137.91	7585.00		

Untrained teachers were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that ‘Teaching quality does not seem to be dependent on teachers’ academic qualifications’ ( $U= 6045.000$ ,  $P=.011$ ).

When asked for their perceptions as to whether teachers’ quality depends on teachers’ academic qualifications, the majority indicated their disagreement. Some responded to the open-ended question by stating that, in addition to the academic qualifications of the teacher, the additional factors responsible for affecting the quality of teaching were political, socio-economic, cultural and geographical difficulties. Teachers felt that the quality of teaching not only depends on academic knowledge and qualifications, but that it also depends on, and is influenced by, other elements, such as training and development programs, the working environment, the rules and regulations of the institute and the governing body of a particular region. The respondents also believed that permanent teachers were considerably less likely to agree with the statement that teaching quality is not contingent on the academic qualifications of the teacher, whereas untrained teachers supported the statement that the academic qualifications of the teacher do not affect their teaching quality.

#### 4.3.2 Pedagogical training

Pedagogy is the way that content is delivered. It includes the use of various methodologies that help different children to engage with educational content and learn more effectively, and it recognises that individuals learn in different ways. Training in pedagogy can be provided through in-service training and teacher training (UNESCO, 2014). Almost all of the respondents were in favour of pedagogical training and refreshment programmes for teachers, as they believed that this promotes student performance. Two thirds (66.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 108 (32.5%) agreed with the statement. This means that teachers believe that training and refreshment programmes enhance the quality of teachers’ teaching as the training makes them more skilled. Also, they believe that the refreshment programmes make teachers confident, energetic and more attentive.

Table 1. 13: Statement 2- ‘I believe that training and refreshment programmes for teachers make them more effective in the classroom.’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
Strongly Agree	222	66.9%

<b>Agree</b>	108	32.5%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1	0.3%

To find out teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of training and refreshment programmes, the respondents were also asked an open-ended question in order that the researcher could explore their views in relation to this statement. In response, some respondents said that training and refreshment programmes for teachers encouraged them to perform better. For example, some of the respondents recommended that:

*“Teachers’ training should be provided every year to enhance teachers’ knowledge of teaching more effectively. Similarly, salaries should increase by double to motivate teachers. This would make the teacher more honest and responsible” (R23).*

*“A good and well-trained teacher is always concerned about the psychology of children. A trained teacher can make a child understand what the teacher teaches inside the four walls of the classroom. Thus, it helps to make the teaching-learning process effective” (R238).*

*“The teaching and learning activities of private schools have to be improved in Nepal. The teacher should be provided with a special type of training by the private sector to bring good results. I am hoping that this research will be helpful for this aspect” (R244).*

*“Different types of training should be provided to teachers so that they will be more qualified and so that their teaching will be more effective in the classroom” (R315).*

Hence, teachers argued that training programmes give teachers knowledge of pedagogy. These programs are the most important things for enhancing teaching quality and they make a teacher more attentive, honest and responsible for their teaching activities. However, there is a lack of implementation of this in practice in Nepal.

#### **4.3.3 Refreshment programmes**

In this study, out of 332 teachers, nearly 94.3% (i.e., 43.4% strongly agreed and 50.9% agreed) believed that refreshment programmes are effective and helpful for motivating and inspiring

both teachers and students, which enhances students' academic performance. In addition, there were very few participants who believed that training programs and refreshment programmes did not lead to the effective performance of students.

Table 1. 14: Statement 3- 'I have received some of the training and refreshment programmes helpful for effective teaching.'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	144	43.4%
<b>Agree</b>	169	50.9%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	14	4.2%
<b>Disagree</b>	5	1.5%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0	0

Some respondents made valuable comments by responding to an open-ended question designed to explore their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of training. For example, respondent P75 presented their views as follows:

*“One of the significant factors for effective teaching is refreshment programme for teaching staff. However, the concerned authority must be attentive about monitoring the refreshment programmes and making sure that the learned teaching practices are applied effectively.”*

Respondents also claimed that the refreshment programmes for teachers and training were not important if the knowledge gained could not be applied in the classroom. An effective mechanism should be created by the government to monitor for the implementation of knowledge in the classroom. One of the respondents (P251) compared public and private school teachers and their teaching performance and stated that:

*“While comparing the teachers of private and public schools, teachers from public schools tend to be more skilled, qualified and well-trained. However, the performance of private schools is far better than that of government schools. I think private school students achieve better scores because of their management, strict school rules and the more responsible attitude of teachers towards the students.”*

The respondent suggested that school management should provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching skills and use of effective methods. However, one of the respondents shared his belief that the head teacher or school management should play a role in the implementation of skills in the classroom and encouraging teachers to share ideas with other teachers.

Subjecting the teacher survey results to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test in order to examine teachers' perceptions about the qualifications that they had achieved, i.e., bachelor's degree and master's degree or above, revealed a statistically significant difference at the level of  $P < .05$  ( $U = 12130.00$ ,  $P = .034 < .05$ ).

Table 1. 15: *Mann-Whitney U Test (BA vs. MA)*

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
BA	162	176.62	26613.00	12130.00	.034**
MA and Above	170	156.85	26665.00		

When compared with the BA group of respondents, the MA and above group was significantly more likely to agree with the statement that 'I have received some of the training and refreshment programmes that help in effective teaching.' The findings show that most of the teachers were of the opinion that training and refreshment programmes increase the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers' teaching quality. Furthermore, such programmes enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge, skills and strategies, which they believe improves the students' performance. However, teachers stated that it would be beneficial to other teachers and students if trained teachers shared their knowledge and ideas (which were gained from training) in order to make classroom practice effective.

Similarly, an examination of the teacher survey results with statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test exposed almost significantly different strengths of agreement when it came to teaching quality and its impact on students' performance (i.e., permanent versus non-permanent jobs).



Table 1. 16: *Mann-Whitney U Test (permanent vs. non-permanent)*

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
<b>Permanent</b>	128	156.43	20023.00	11767.000	.088*
<b>Non-permanent</b>	204	172.82	35255.00		

Permanent teachers were more likely to agree with the statement that ‘I have received some of the training and refreshment programmes that help in effective teaching’ (U=11767.000, P=0.088). This nonparametric test was applied in order to find out the relationship between perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students’ performance by considering whether teachers were trained or untrained. It revealed a statistically significantly different strength of agreement level of  $p < 0.05$  (U=5475.500,  $p = .000 < .05$ ).

Table 1. 17: *Mann-Whitney U Test (trained vs. untrained)*

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
<b>Trained</b>	277	158.77	43978.50	5475.500	.000**
<b>Untrained</b>	55	205.45	11299.50		

Trained teachers had a significantly stronger level of agreement with the statement that ‘I have received some of the training and refreshment programmes that help in effective teaching’ (U=5475.500, P=0.000).

In response to the open-ended question, respondents articulated their views about the fact that refreshment programmes are not significant if the knowledge is not implemented in the classroom. However, some of the respondents also specified that if the school management has the intention of improving the teaching skills of teachers, which also help to improve the performance of the students, it should provide opportunities for training. As per the Mann-Whitney U test on teachers with a BA versus those with an MA, it was found that respondents with a master’s degree qualification were considerably more likely to agree that refreshment programmes aid in the provision of effective teaching. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U test on

permanent versus non-permanent and trained versus untrained teachers found that permanent teachers and trained teachers were more likely to agree with the statement that training and refreshment programmes helped to facilitate effective teaching.

#### 4.3.4 Teaching experience

With regard to teachers' teaching experience, 86.1% of respondents agreed with the statement that 'Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice.' As per the data, a greater number of respondents agreed with the statement that 'Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice.' Moreover, most of the teachers thought that the more experience teachers had, the higher the quality of the teachers' teaching skills would be.

Table 1. 18: Statement 4- 'Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	115	34.6%
<b>Agree</b>	171	51.5%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	15	4.5%
<b>Disagree</b>	30	9.0%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1	0.3%

In this regard, a couple of teachers expressed their view, via the open-ended question, that they were in favor of the statement, while also making some suggestions. For example, one of the respondents from a rural area (R73) stated that:

*“The art of teaching is the art of discovery, so teaching cannot be effective in classroom teaching carried out by experienced teachers if they do not wish to upgrade their skills. The teacher should follow newly-introduced research and [use] teaching methods with new technologies.”*

This respondent explained that some experienced teachers; namely, those who had been teaching in public schools as permanent teaching staff, were not implementing new methods of teaching using new technology. They didn't want to upgrade their skills and used the same traditional teaching methods.

Subjecting the results to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test exposed a significantly different strength of agreement between teachers in private schools when compared to those in public schools.

Table 1. 19: *Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Public school</b>	169	180.86	30565.50	11346.500	.002**
<b>Private school</b>	163	151.61	24712.50	`	

Private school teachers were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that ‘Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice’ (U= 11346.500, P= 0.002), compared with public school teachers.

Similarly, a significantly different strength of agreement was found between teachers in schools located in rural areas when compared to those working in schools in urban areas.

Table 1. 20: *Mann-Whitney U Test (urban vs. rural)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Urban school</b>	164	178.00	29192.00	11890.000	.017**
<b>Rural school</b>	168	155.27	26086.00		

Accordingly, teachers in schools in rural areas were significantly more likely to agree that ‘Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice’ (U=11890.000, P= 0.017).

Hence, it was found that 86% of respondents believed that teachers with more experience would have more knowledge of effective teaching practice, while 4% responded that they were neutral on this issue. However, 10% responded that they disagreed with the statement. In their responses to the open-ended question, it was found that certain qualified teachers who were teaching in public schools as permanent teachers were not using the novel technique of teaching with technology. Also, the Mann-Whitney U test on public versus private and urban versus

rural schools revealed that teachers in private schools were more likely to agree, that teachers with more experience would have more knowledge of effective teaching practice.

#### 4.4 Teachers' characteristics and students' academic performance

This section examines teachers' characteristics with a focus on the respondents' perceptions as to whether or not teachers' personalities, attitudes, behaviour, personal teaching skills and strategies make any difference to classroom interactions. Furthermore, this section looks into teachers' opinions about whether or not a student-teacher relationship with individual support and care is important in order to achieve better performance.

##### 4.4.1 Teachers' personality, attitude and behaviour

The data shows that almost all (99%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that teachers' personalities, attitudes and behaviours encourage students to pay attention in the classroom. There were few respondents who inferred that the behaviour and attitude of a teacher did not influence students' performance. In addition, most teachers thought that the characteristics, behaviour and attitude of teachers in the classroom could influence teaching and learning activities.

Table 1. 21: Statement 5- 'Teachers' personalities, attitudes and behaviours encourage students to pay attention in the classroom'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	205	61.7%
<b>Agree</b>	124	37.3%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	2	0.6%
<b>Disagree</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0	0.0%

In their responses to the open-ended question, some of the teachers shared their views about the role of personal characteristics in teaching and learning activities. For instance, one of the teachers (R37) claimed that:

*"Teachers' honesty, hard work and strong interest in teaching are the most crucial factors in school education since they help to boost up their teaching and learning activities."*

The respondents indicated that teachers could enhance students' performance if they are honest to their profession in terms of focusing on teaching by being loving and caring while in school. Another respondent (R142) reacted differently to the statement, by saying that:

*“A teacher should provide a homely environment at school. A teacher should have skills that can encourage students to explore their knowledge and ideas. That helps to boost students' understanding levels.”*

The respondent shared their opinion that the teacher is the motivator of the students and should maintain good relationship with students. Teachers should take care to motivate students in learning activities.

An examination of the survey result revealed a significantly different strength in respondents' agreement level with the statement between teachers in private schools when compared to those in public schools.

Table 1. 22: Mann-Whitney U Test

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
Public school	169	175.78	29707.50	12204.500	.034**
Private school	163	156.87	25570.50	`	

According to the result, teachers from private schools were in significantly stronger agreement with the statement that ‘Teachers’ personalities, attitudes and behaviours encourage students to pay attention in the classroom’ (U= 12204.5, P= 0.034). Numerous respondents from private schools highly agreed with the statement. However, no significant differences were found when comparing urban and rural areas, experienced versus less experienced teachers, trained versus untrained teachers, male versus female teachers and permanent versus non-permanent teachers, or when comparing teachers by age.

Hence, it was found that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement and were of the opinion that the teacher's personality, attitude and behaviour encourage students to pay attention in the teaching space. Responses to the open-ended question revealed the respondents' perception that teachers could improve the performance of students only if they remained

dedicated to their occupation in terms of concentrating on teaching by providing love and care in school. Also, the respondents suggested that a good relationship between teachers and students helps to improve performance. As per the Mann-Whitney U test, it was found that private school teachers agreed with the statement that the personalities, attitudes and behaviors of teachers inspire students to pay attention in the classroom.

#### 4.4.2 Personal teaching skills and strategies

This study also explored teachers' perceptions as to whether or not teachers' personal teaching skills and strategies contribute to students' better performance. Nowadays, teachers use various kinds of advanced technology and take part in different innovative training and development programmes to increase their knowledge and understanding. In this study, it was found that almost all (95%) of the respondents were opposed to the statement that 'Teachers' personal teaching skills and strategies do not make any difference in encouraging students in classroom activities.'

Table 1. 23: Statement 6- 'Teachers' personal teaching skills and strategies do not make any difference in encouraging students in classroom activities'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	3	0.9%
<b>Agree</b>	11	3.3%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	4	1.2%
<b>Disagree</b>	197	59.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	117	35.2%

In their response to the open-ended question, one of the respondents (R249) discussed the issues of personal teaching skills and strategies as follows:

*“We have not been able to become effective enough in spite of applying different strategies and methods in the classroom. The performance of the students has not been improved due to the lack of willpower. This is the outcome of the absence of necessary basic concepts in students in the concerned subjects. To overcome this problem, the concerned department should implement the right decision at the right time for quality education.”*

The respondent argued that the government should take action to improve pedagogical skills and should form a strong mechanism to monitor for effective teaching in the classroom. Thus, if the government implemented a monitoring system, the efficiency and quality of teachers would be increased. Further, the respondent believed that this would also increase the skills, knowledge and experience of teachers on subject-related matters.

Exposing the teacher survey study result to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test showed a significantly different strength of agreement between teachers who had completed a BA when compared to those who had completed an MA or higher level of academic qualification.

Table 1. 24: *Mann-Whitney U Test (BA vs. MA)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>BA</b>	162	155.62	25210.00	12007.000	.020 **
<b>MA and Above</b>	170	176.87	30068.00	25210.00	

The teachers who had completed a bachelor's degree were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that 'Teachers' personal teaching skills and strategies do not make any difference in encouraging students in classroom activities' (U= 12007.000, P=0.020). Teachers with an MA or above showed a lower level of agreement with the statement and believed that teachers' personal skills and strategies made a positive difference in encouraging students in classroom activities.

Hence, it was found that the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the personal teaching skills and strategies of the teacher do not make any difference in encouraging the classroom activities of the student. Also, the respondents claimed that the government ought to take action to provide pedagogical training to teachers and that it must implement a robust tool for monitoring teachers. Likewise, from the results of the Mann-Whitney U test, it was found that the teachers who had a bachelor's degree were considerably more likely to agree with the statement that the teacher's personal teaching skills and strategies do not make any difference in inspiring students in classroom activities.

### 4.4.3 Teacher-student relationship

The study found that 52% of the respondents did not agree with the statement that the student-teacher relationship is not important to enhancing students' performance, whereas 44% of the respondents agreed with it. Table 25 shows that most of the teachers' thought that a positive and strong relationship between students and teachers helped to enhance students' performance in the classroom. Moreover, they believed that such a relationship enhances trust and loyalty between them and helps to build and maintain better relationships.

Table 1. 25: Statement 7- 'A good student-teacher relationship is not important in enhancing students' performance'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	5.1%
Agree	129	38.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	3.9%
Disagree	121	36.4%
Strongly Disagree	52	15.7%

In their response to the open-ended question, some respondents expressed their views about the relationship between teachers and students. For example, one of the respondents (R73) suggested that:

*"A good relationship should be maintained between teachers, students, parents and the management committee to improve the quality of education."*

Similarly, one of the teachers (R238) believed that a good relationship with students should be maintained to ensure positive progress. For example, one of the respondents argued as follows:

*"Children are from various cultures, religions and societies, which creates problems in the teaching and learning process. Also, human beings have different attitudes, natures and habits. So, teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not an easy job without a good relationship existing between all the people concerned. First of all, we need to understand the child's nature, attitude and habits. Then, only a teacher can make a child understand what the teacher inside the four walls of the classroom is teaching. Thus, the teaching and learning process works effectively if we maintain a good relationship between the teacher and students."*



The responses to the open-ended question supported the statement; namely, the respondents felt that a good teacher-student relationship is one of the factors contributing to students' academic performance.

An analysis of the teacher survey results with statistical analysis using the Mann-Whiney U rank order test in SPSS found a significantly different strength of agreement between the respondents from public schools when compared to those from private schools.

Table 1. 26 *Table 26: Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Public school</b>	169	156.74	26488.50	12123.500	.045**
<b>Private school</b>	163	176.62	28789.50		

According to the result, public school teachers were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that 'A good student-teacher relationship is not important in enhancing student's performance' (U= 12123.500, p= 0.045). With regard to this relationship, public school teachers believed that a good teacher-student relationship enhanced students' performance.

The above table shows that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement that a positive relationship between teachers and students is not an important factor for enhancing the performance of students, which means that most teachers think that it is an essential element for improving students' performance.

In addition, in the responses to the open-ended question, it was found that most of the respondents perceived a good teacher-student relationship to be an important factor. At the same time, the Mann-Whitney U test on private versus public school teachers found that teachers working in public schools are more likely to agree with the statement that a good relationship between students and teachers is not important in improving the academic performance of students.

#### **4.4.4 Individual support and care of students**

The study also attempted to discover teachers' perceptions about the individual care and support that students received from teachers. The study found that most of the respondents

(92.1%) agreed with the statement that students would show better performance in the classroom if they received individual support from the teacher. Furthermore, their responses indicate that if teachers supported, every student individually, then the performance of students could be enhanced. Most of the teachers were in agreement with this statement, which is shown in the table below.

Table 1. 27: Statement 8- ‘Students would show better performance in the classroom if they received individual support from the teacher’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	139	41.9%
<b>Agree</b>	167	50.3%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	9	2.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	13	3.9%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4	1.2%

In addition to supporting the statement, some of the teachers expressed their views, through the open-ended question, that students need individual care and support from their family as well as teachers in order to boost their performance. For example, one of the teachers (R227) argued that:

*“We must give as much support and care to the weak students as to the average and talented students. However, students spend about 6 hours a day in school and 18 hours at home. So, the education of the parent also matters a lot to bringing about positive change in students. In the context of Nepal, the majority of the parents unable guide their children in their studies.”*

The teacher survey carried out in this research indicated that there are many social factors that contribute to the quality of education. Some of the respondents shared their belief in the fact that parents could not help their children in their studies because of their own poor economic condition, lower academic background and their agriculture-based professions.

In this study, teachers’ responses regarding individual support from teachers found that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that when students receive individual support from the teacher, then better academic performance could be attained. In their responses to the open-ended question, the participants shared their opinions about the cause of

poor student performance. Many were of the belief that parents were not competent in assisting their children with their studies as a result of their deprived economic conditions, underprivileged academic performance and agriculture-based professions.

## 4.5 Policy and implementation

This section focuses on the government's policy and its implementation. According to the teachers' perceptions, the quality of education depends on education policies and their proper implementation. The result of the teacher survey, which is presented below, indicates that auditing, monitoring and evaluation are the major factors for educational development. In addition, the respondents argued that curriculum and pedagogical strategy also contribute to maintaining students' better performance and they also believed that the head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance by implementing the rules and regulations.

### 4.5.1 Education policy and implementation

Table 28 makes clear the fact that most of the teachers think that the quality of education depends on education policies and their effective implementation. Furthermore, they also think that educational institutions and the quality of education are highly influenced by the legal rules and regulations of the governing body.

The study found that almost all (95.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the quality of education depends on education policies and their proper implementation.

Table 1. 28: Statement 9- 'Quality of education depends upon education policies and their proper implementation'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
Strongly Agree	155	46.7%
Agree	163	49.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5	1.5%
Disagree	8	2.4%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3%

In response to the open-ended question, some of the respondents stated their belief that government policies and their implementation are the main factor that increases the quality of education. According to the respondents' point of view, the main focus should be on implementing the same curriculum for all private and public school students, the use of effective teaching methods and monitoring policy implementation. For example, one of the respondents argued that:

*“National educational policy, curriculum, course books, teachers, students and stakeholders play vital roles that contribute to improving the quality of education, which could result in good outputs for society. For the expected goals of education, the curriculum should be created as per the needs of the individual and society. Innovative techniques and methods should be applied for the best results” (R32).*

One of the respondents argued that policies should be created after discussing the problem in the field and that educational institution need enough time and resources to implement the new policies. On the other hand, the government also needs to carry out monitoring in order to ensure the appropriate implementation of the policies:

*“To have a quality education, I think the government of every country should prepare a curriculum with limited courses according to the age of students. However, these days, as a result of competition among different schools, private schools have been keeping the difficult course book, which is a challenge for teachers to complete. So, such a course makes students less excited to learn and keeps them away from study” (R271).*

The responses to the open-ended questions exposed the fact that teachers felt that government policy and its implementation is one of the most important factors that contributes to the quality of education. A key issue was that fact that there is no uniformity regarding the use of certain courses or textbooks in practice.

Hence, this study found that the majority of the respondents believed that the quality of education remains contingent on education policies and their appropriate execution, which helps in enhancing the academic performance of students.

#### 4.5.2 Auditing, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of teachers

95.8% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers are not essential to maintaining the quality of education. Therefore, most respondents believe that the auditing and supervision of teachers is essential for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education.

Table 1. 29: Statement 10- ‘Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers is not essential to maintaining the quality of education’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Agree</b>	8	2.4%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	5	1.5%
<b>Disagree</b>	163	49.1%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	155	46.7%

When responding to the open-ended question, some of the teachers expressed the fact that they were in favour of monitoring teacher activities and said that this would be more effective in improving teaching quality. For example, some of the teachers mentioned that:

*“Teachers should follow innovative trends and use new technologies for teaching. In addition, an effective monitoring system and immediate feedback to the teachers (i.e., the facilitators) are the most important factors for promoting a quality education” (P11).*

*“A monitoring system should be implemented in all private and public schools to control the quality of education. Reward, punishment and job security may lead the teacher to do better in her/his job” (R54).*

There was an almost statistically significant different level of disagreement between trained and untrained teachers.

Table 1. 30: Mann-Whitney U Test (trained vs. untrained)

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
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<b>Trained</b>	277	169.95	47076.50	6661.500	.089*
<b>Untrained</b>	55	149.12	8201.50		

The respondents' responses indicate that untrained teachers were in stronger agreement, compared to trained teachers, with the statement that 'Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers is not essential to maintaining the quality of education' (U= 6661.500, P=0.089). Trained teachers were in favour of auditing, monitoring and the evaluation of teachers, which are essential for maintaining education quality.

Similarly, applying the Mann-Whitney U rank order test based on teachers' perceptions of the significance of the academic qualifications achieved by respondents (i.e., BA versus MA), found an almost significant different strength of disagreement within the variables.

Table 1. 31: *Mann-Whitney U Test (BA vs. MA)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>BA</b>	162	157.94	25585.50	12382.50	.071*
<b>Ma and Above</b>	170	174.10	29692.50	0	

Teachers who had completed a BA were more likely to agree with the statement that 'Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers is not essential to maintaining the quality of education' (U= 12382.500, P= 0.071), whereas teachers who had completed an MA had positive thoughts about monitoring and evaluation systems being important in improving the quality of education. Therefore, these respondents believed that there should be a monitoring system to provide quality control and job security to motivate teachers, which would improve the quality of teaching.

Thus, this study found that the majority of the respondents believed that auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers were extremely important in order to maintain the quality of education. Likewise, the study found that untrained teachers, as well as teachers with a bachelor's level degree, also believed that the auditing, monitoring, supervision and the evaluation of teachers is vitally important.

### 4.5.3 The role of the head teacher

This study found that 86.1% of respondents agreed with the statement that the head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance. 25% of teachers strongly agreed and 61.1% agreed with the statement. According to the teachers' responses, most teachers think that a leader is a person who can direct, motivate, manage and control all the activities in school, which can also keep staffs on the right track.

Table 1. 32: Statement 11- 'The head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	83	25.0%
<b>Agree</b>	203	61.1%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	14	4.2%
<b>Disagree</b>	24	7.2%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	8	2.4%

In support of the statement, one of the respondents (R74) pointed out that:

*“In some conditions, the teacher has to be given freedom to choose to apply his/her thoughts to teaching students for the betterment of quality education. So, the head teacher should be flexible and motivate the teacher to use effective teaching methods.”*

The majority of the respondents agreed with statement 11. Respondent R74 believed that if teachers have the freedom to apply their own teaching methods, this might be fruitful for effective teaching.

After examining the teacher survey by using the Mann-Whitney U test, it revealed significantly different strengths of agreement between teachers in private schools when compared to teachers in public schools.

Table 1. 33: *Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Public school</b>	169	178.82	30221.00	11691.000	.0006**
<b>Private school</b>	163	153.72	25057.00		

According to the result, private school teachers showed a stronger agreement with the statement that ‘The head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students’ academic performance’ (U= 11691.000, p=0.006).

Likewise, an examination of the teacher survey with statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test exposed almost significantly different strengths of agreement between teachers in urban schools when compared to those in schools located in rural areas.

Table 1. 34: *Mann-Whitney U Test (urban vs. rural)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Urban school</b>	164	158.69	26025.00	12495.000	.092*
<b>Rural school</b>	168	174.13	29253.00		

The respondents from schools which were located in urban areas showed a stronger agreement with the statement that ‘The head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students’ academic performance’ (U=12495.000. P=.092).

Similarly, a statistical analysis of the teacher survey result using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test by considering teachers’ perceptions of quality of teaching exposed almost significantly different strengths of agreement between teachers who had a bachelor’s degree compared to those who had a master’s degree or above.

Table 1. 35: *Mann-Whitney U Test (BA vs. MA)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>BA</b>	162	158.52	25680.50	12477.500	.089*
<b>MA and Above</b>	170	174.10	29597.50		



According to the result, teachers who had completed a BA were more likely to agree with the statement that ‘The head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students’ academic performance’ (U=12477.500, P=0.089).

Hence, the study found that the majority of the respondents believed that the head teacher carries out a significant role in improving the academic performance of students. Also, it was found that teachers working in private schools that are located in urban areas and teachers who had completed a bachelor’s degree agreed with the statement that the main role in improving the academic performance of students is played by the head teacher of the school.

#### 4.5.4 Curricular and pedagogical strategy

In this study, it was observed that 90.1% respondents believed that the quality of education depends on curricular and pedagogical strategy. The data shows that most of the teachers disagree with the statement that the quality of education does not depend on circular and pedagogical strategy, which means that most teachers believe that these are the essential elements by which to improve students’ educational performance.

Table 1. 36: Statement 12- ‘Quality of education is not dependent on curricular and pedagogical strategy’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	10	3.0%
<b>Agree</b>	14	4.2%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	9	2.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	160	48.2%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	139	41.9%

In addition, some respondents expressed their opinions via the open-ended question and stated that they disagreed with the statement that the quality of education depends on curricular and pedagogical strategy. They appeared to indicate that the improvement of teaching and learning activities depends on how effectively the curriculum and strategic pedagogy have been applied. For example, respondent R52 argued that:

*“Educational tours for teachers and the effective use of ICT can help to enhance performance. Teachers and students need mini-breaks from teaching and learning activities. A 5 to 10 minute break after every two hours makes them refreshed [...] On the other hand, physical exercise and sports periods should be maintained in a routine that makes the school environment pleasurable.”*

The respondent suggested that there should be a break for teaching staff after two hours’ teaching. He also believed that physical exercise and sports activities should be run in school to help children to develop in many ways. According to the respondent’s suggestion, the curriculum and pedagogy need to be revised from time to time for the betterment of the quality of education.

The study found, according to the perceptions of the teachers surveyed, that the quality of education is contingent on the curriculum as well as pedagogical strategy. Some of the teachers also suggested that curriculum and pedagogy training must be regularly revised to ensure the provision of effective teaching. Furthermore, they believed that innovative actions (such as educational tours and sport activities) should be provided in order to improve the quality of education.

## **4.6 Teaching and learning method**

The main objective of this section was to explore the respondents’ perceptions about teaching and learning methods. In this section, the researcher wanted to examine whether or not students were provided with an equal opportunity to explore their ideas in group discussions and creative activities in the classroom.

### **4.6.1 Teacher-centred versus student-centred pedagogy**

This study found that 306 teachers (92.2%) disagreed with the statement that ‘Teacher-centred pedagogy enhances students’ performance compared with student-centred teaching.’ The teachers did not think that a teacher-centred approach encouraged students to perform better.

Table 1. 37: Statement 13- ‘Teacher-centred pedagogy enhances students’ performance compared with student-centred teaching’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
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<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6	1.8%
<b>Agree</b>	11	3.3%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	9	2.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	201	60.5%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	105	31.6%

In response to the statement, almost all the teachers who responded to the open-ended question stated that they believed that learner-centered pedagogy could be implemented for better academic performance. For example, one of the respondents (R10) argued that:

*“Innovative trends should be borrowed and technologies should be used. Effective monitoring and immediate feedback to the teacher gives them a chance to improve their teaching [and] that helps to promote the quality of education, which is only possible in learner-centred pedagogy.”*

In this study, some of teachers stated their belief that the student-centred teaching and learning method is popular. They argued that this method makes pupils pay more attention to their studies because of its constructive and participatory methods. One of the respondents (R148) argued that:

*“In Nepal, the teacher-centered approach has been practiced so much that it has really ruined the creativity of Nepalese students. In my view, we have to learn and practice teaching by following Western countries’ academic processes.”*

Similarly, another respondent (R327) argued that:

*“Things are related to teaching and learning activities. However, teaching doesn’t mean to only to give a lecture; rather, we should understand students’ individuality in the context of Nepal.”*

Respondents argued that the main reason for the weakening quality of education is the traditional teaching method, which prefers one-way communication between the teacher and students. The Nepalese government should apply a student-centred pedagogy, which would allow students to interact in order to explore their ideas.

The teacher survey result was then subjected to statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test. The analysis of the issue of whether teaching quality and students' teachers who have more or less teaching experience revealed almost significantly different strengths of agreement affect academic performance.

Table 1. 38: *Mann-Whitney U Test (0-20 years vs. more than 20 years)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>0-20 years</b>	244	164.70	39503.00	9613.000	.092*
<b>More than 20 years</b>	88	179.26	15775.00		

The result indicated that less experienced respondents voiced a stronger agreement with the statement compared to the more experienced respondents. Teachers with 20 years or less experience had the strongest agreement with the statement that 'Teacher-centred pedagogy enhances students' performance compared with student-centred teaching' and there was an almost statistically significant difference (U= 9613.000, P=.092).

The study found that 92.2% agreed that student-centred pedagogy improves the academic performance of students compared to the teacher-centred approach. In addition, the responses to the open-ended question revealed that the traditional teaching method is considered to be a one-way form of communication between teachers and students. The respondents felt that it is also one of the reasons for the weakening of the quality of education. At the same time, the study found that teachers who had less than 20 years' experience were more likely to be of the opinion that teacher-centred pedagogy improves the performance of students.

#### **4.6.2 Creative activities in the classroom**

Table 6.4.2 presents the results about creative activities in the classroom, which encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding. Out of 332 respondents, almost all (98.5%) agreed with the statement.

Table 1. 39: Statement 14- ‘Creative activities in the classroom encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	212	63.9%
<b>Agree</b>	115	34.6%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	4	1.2%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1	0.3%

In response to the open-ended question, some of the teachers agreed with the statement and stated their belief that creative and additional activities in the classroom are effective, as such activities encourage students to explore their ideas and knowledge. In this regard, one of the respondents (R74) argued that:

*“An additional and creative activity in school is most important for developing a student’s skills, and it helps to maintain their discipline, which leads them to enhance their performance.”*

Analysing the survey data of the respondents through statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank test in SPSS revealed almost statistically significant differences in responses to the statement that ‘Creative activities in the classroom encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding’ (U= 12451.00, P= 0.070).

Table 1. 40: Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
<b>Public school</b>	169	174.33	29461.00	12451.00	.070*
<b>Private school</b>	163	158.39	25817.00		

Private school teachers had a stronger level of agreement with this statement when compared to teachers from public schools.

The study found that the majority of the respondents agreed that creative activities in the teaching space inspire students to take part by exploring their knowledge as well as understanding. Likewise, responses to the open-ended question revealed respondents’ belief

that creative activities help to uphold discipline, which results in the enhancement of the academic performance of students. At the same time, respondents were of the opinion that private schools are more attentive about providing creative activities in the teaching space to encourage students to participate and to explore their knowledge and understanding.

#### 4.6.3 Equal opportunities for students

This study found that almost all (99.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that ‘Teaching and learning are effective if a teacher provides equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge’. Furthermore, most teachers appeared to support the notion that teaching and learning can be effective if the teacher is able to provide equal opportunities to their students so that they can share their views, opinions and ideas. With the help of such opportunities, students will be treated equally. The respondents further stated that this would also develop a friendly environment in the classroom and encourage students to cooperate with each other, which may enhance their skills and knowledge.

Table 1. 41: Statement 15- ‘Teaching and learning are effective if a teacher provides equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	208	62.7%
<b>Agree</b>	123	37.0%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1	0.3%

Only one respondent was found to strongly disagree with the statement. One of the teachers (R07) shared their views by responding to the open-ended question. They stated that if a student has been given equal opportunities in the teaching and learning process in a classroom, it would definitely help them to generate and explore their ideas and knowledge, thereby boosting their understanding:

*“To motivate students to explore their ideas, the teacher should provide equal opportunities to participate in learning activities. If students become inactive, the teacher should create appropriate situations to make them active for learning. For this, the*

*teacher should have many kinds of essential materials to teach them. The materials will make the class more effective. It will attract the students' attention to the lesson."*

Examining the teacher survey result with statistical analysis using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U rank order test revealed an almost significantly different strength of agreement between teachers from rural areas when compared to those from urban areas.

Table 1. 42: *Mann-Whitney U Test (urban vs. rural)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Urban school</b>	164	174.51	28619.50	12462.500	.073*
<b>Rural school</b>	168	158.68	26658.50		

Teachers in rural areas were more likely to agree with the statement that, 'Teaching and learning are effective if a teacher provides equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge' (U= 12465.500, P= 0.073).

Thus, the survey found that the majority of the respondents believed that teaching and learning are effective when the teacher delivers equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge. Responses to the open-ended question indicated that teachers who are employed in schools located in rural areas were supportive of the statement that teaching and learning remain effective if the educator delivers equal chances for students and shares their ideas and knowledge.

#### **4.6.4 Group discussions and presentations**

The study found that almost all (99.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that 'Group discussions and presentations in a classroom enhance students' understanding and help to create new ideas and concepts.'

Table 1. 43: Statement 16- 'Group discussions and presentations in a classroom enhance students' understanding and help to create new ideas and concepts'

<b>Scale of Agreement</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	199	59.9%
<b>Agree</b>	130	39.2%

<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2	0.6%

Some of the teachers stated their views by responding to the open-ended question. They argued that teaching would be effective if the teaching and learning process was interactive and scientific. For example, one of the respondents (R112) argued that:

*“For quality education, new education policies should be implemented on the basis of a scientific method. Teaching and learning will be effective if we encourage students in group discussions that help the students participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding.”*

The respondent mentioned that there was a gap between government policy and its implementation because there is a lack of essential resources. In order to implement scientific methods using new technologies, the government should monitor for effective teaching and learning environments.

An examination of the teacher survey with statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test exposed a significantly different strength of agreement between teachers in private schools when compared to those in public schools.

Table 1. 44: *Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Public school</b>	169	179.64	30358.50	11553.500	.003**
<b>Private school</b>	163	152.88	24919.50		

Private school teachers were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that ‘Group discussions and presentations in a classroom enhance students’ understanding and help to create new ideas and concepts’ (U= 11553.500, P= .003).

The study found that the majority of the respondents in private schools agreed that group discussions and presentations in classrooms enhance the understanding of students, which assists them in forming new ideas and concepts. Also, respondents mentioned that due to the



absence of important resources there is a gap between government policy and its execution. The study also suggested that it remains essential for the government to monitor whether there is an effective environment for teaching and learning or not.

## 4.7 Planning and preparation

This research also allocated some statements to collecting teachers' perceptions regarding the planning and preparation done by the teacher before class. Additionally, there were some statements about subject matter knowledge and lesson plans. The researcher also included some statements about the effectiveness of homework and feedback to students.

### 4.7.1 Teachers' preparation before class

The study found that almost all of the respondents (98.5%) agreed with the statement that 'Preparation by the teacher helps them to teach with a clearer vision'. As a result of globalisation and high levels of competition between educational institutions, there has been a rapid increase in the use of innovative strategies and procedures. Therefore, most of the teachers believed that pre-preparation were effective and that it improved their quality of teaching when combined with the use of creative and innovative techniques.

Table 1. 45: Statement 17- 'Preparation by the teacher helps them to teach with a clearer vision'

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	251	75.6%
<b>Agree</b>	76	22.9%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4	1.2%

One of the teachers stated, when responding to the open-ended question, that if a teacher prepares themselves for the subject matter and topic, then taking the class would be fruitful and effective.

### 4.7.2 Subject matter knowledge

Almost all 321 (96.7%) of the respondents did not agree with the statement that teachers should not have good subject matter knowledge in order to teach effectively.

Table 1. 46: Statement 18- ‘Subject matter knowledge does not lead to better performance’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6	1.8%
<b>Agree</b>	5	1.5%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Disagree</b>	147	44.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	174	52.4%

Some respondents answered the open-ended question to give their views about subject matter knowledge. For example, one of the teachers (R03) stated that:

*“If students are given ample opportunity to search for knowledge regarding the curriculum as well as behavioural subject matter, learning would be more effective. Motivation and the subject matter delivery procedure play a vital role in permanent learning. Instructional materials are also effective factors in teaching and learning activities.”*

This respondent believed that teachers with a good level of subject matter knowledge would help to make classes more effective. In this respect, teaching resources and materials, motivational activities and good teaching delivery help to create a positive teaching and learning environment.

#### 4.7.3 Lesson planning

The study found that high numbers of respondents (96.4%) disagreed with the statement that lesson planning does not aid better student performance.

Table 1. 47: Statement 19- ‘Lesson planning does not aid better student performance’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	3	0.9%
<b>Agree</b>	6	1.8%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	3	0.9%
<b>Disagree</b>	170	51.2%

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	150	45.2%
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#### 4.7.4 Homework and feedback

The study found that a remarkable majority of the respondents (91.9%) disagreed with the statement that homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more.

Table 1. 48: Statement 20- ‘Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more’

Scale of Agreement	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	12	3.6%
<b>Agree</b>	13	3.9%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	2	0.6%
<b>Disagree</b>	137	41.3%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	168	50.6%

One of the respondents commented, in response to the open-ended question, that:

*“We must give much support to the weak students. They should be encouraged to do the homework and, once they return the homework, the teacher must give them feedback so that they can improve.”*

Hence, the majority of the respondents revealed that homework and feedback encourage students to learn more. Subjecting the teacher survey results to statistical analysis by using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test revealed almost statistically significant different strengths of agreement between teachers from public schools and teachers from private schools.

Table 1. 49: Mann-Whitney U Test (public vs. private)

Groups	Number	Rank Average	Sum of Rank	U	P
<b>Public school</b>	169	158.29	26751.50	12386.500	.076*
<b>Private school</b>	163	175.01	28526.50		

Public school teachers were more likely to agree with the statement that ‘Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more’ (U= 12386.500, p=0.076).

Similarly, an examination of the teacher survey result through statistical analysis by using the Mann-Whitney U rank order test clearly indicated a statistically significant different strength of agreement between the variables, i.e., male versus female teachers.

Table 1. 50: *Mann-Whitney U Test (male vs. female)*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rank Average</b>	<b>Sum of Rank</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Male</b>	287	170.21	48851.50	5391.500	.047**
<b>Female</b>	45	142.81	6426.50		

In this study, female teachers had a significantly stronger level of agreement when compared to male teachers ( $U=5391.500$ ,  $P=.047$ ) in response to the statement that ‘Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more’.

The study found that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement and believed that the preparation done by the teacher regarding the subject matter and topic helped the classroom activities to remain effective and successful. The study also found that teachers appeared to be of the opinion that the teaching and learning activities would be effective if there was an adequate availability of motivational activities, teaching resources and materials. The study also found that teachers working in public schools and female teachers also stated that homework and feedback encourage students to learn more.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from the in-depth interviews that were carried out with sixteen head teachers/principals of both private and public schools. These were conducted in order to examine teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence the quality of teaching and its impact on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Nepal. The interview questions were centred on detecting teachers’ perceptions in relation to teachers’

professionalism, teaching pedagogy, the school environment, government policy and implementation, along with parental responsibilities and the social and economic factors that have an impact on students' performance. On the basis of the findings of the in-depth interviews, themes and sub-themes were developed. The emerging themes and sub-themes are teachers' perceptions of the school environment and location, teaching and learning resources and facilities, teachers' quality and planning, policy and implementation and other socio-economic factors. The interviews were very useful for collecting the primary data in order to fulfill the aims and objectives of this study.

## **5.2 Profile of the respondents**

In-depth interviews were conducted with sixteen head teachers, including three females, from different locations (i.e., both urban and rural). The interview respondents were from both private and public schools. The profile of the interviewees (i.e., head teachers/principals) is presented below.

Table 1. 51: *Profile of interviewees*

Profile of Interviewees (Qualitative Data)									
Participant	School Type	School Location	Participants' Age	Participants' Sex	Participants' Qualification	Teaching Experience	Appointment Status	Training Status	Code/Remark
Int: 01	Public	Urban	46	Male	MA	24 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 1/Pub/Urban/M46
Int: 02	Private	Urban	51	Female	BA	21 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 2/Pvt/Urban/F51
Int: 03	Private	Urban	53	Male	MA	25 years+	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 3/Pvt/Urban/M53
Int: 04	Private	Urban	43	Male	MA	16 years	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 4/Pvt/Urban/M43
Int: 05	Public	Rural	52	Female	MA	20 years+	Permanent	Trained	Int. 5/Pub/Rurl/F52
Int: 06	Private	Urban	45	Male	PhD	13 years	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 6/Pvt/Urban/M45
Int: 07	Public	Rural	54	Male	MA	20 years+	Permanent	Trained	Int. 7/Pub/Rurl/M54
Int: 08	Public	Urban	53	Male	MA	22 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 8/Pub/Urban/M53
Int: 09	Private	Rural	49	Female	BA	25 years	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49
Int: 10	Public	Urban	58	Male	MA	25 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 10/Pub/Urban/M58
Int: 11	Public	Rural	62	Male	MA	25 years+	Permanent	Trained	Int. 11/Pub/Rurl/M62
Int: 12	Private	Rural	67	Male	MA	25 years+	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 12/Pvt/Rurl/M67
Int: 13	Private	Rural	41	Male	MA	18 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41
Int: 14	Public	Urban	42	Male	MA	17 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 14/Pub/Urban/M42
Int: 15	Public	Urban	41	Male	MA	19 years	Permanent	Trained	Int. 15/Pub/Urban/M41
Int: 16	Private	Rural	45	Male	MA	21 years	Non-permanent	Trained	Int. 16/Pvt/Rurl/M46

### 5.3 Demographic distribution of qualitative data

The qualitative data was collected on the basis of age, gender, academic qualifications, teacher training status, teaching experience, school location, school types and appointment status, as shown in the table below. In terms of age group, equal numbers of respondents were selected from the 50 years and younger age group and from the 50 years plus age group. The majority of the respondents were male. An equal number of participants were selected from public and private schools, and slightly more were drawn from urban locations.

Table 1. 52: *Demographic distributions*

S.N.	Categories	Group	No of respondents
1.	Age group	25-50 years	8
		50 plus years	8
2.	Gender	Male	13
		Female	3
3.	Location	Urban school	9
		Rural school	7
4.	School Type	Public school	8
		Private school	8
5.	Academic Qualification	BA	2
		MA/PhD	14
6.	Experience	1-20 years	5
		20 years plus	11
7.	Training Status	Trained	16
		Untrained	0
8.	Appointment status	Permanent	10
		Non-permanent	6

In terms of the academic qualifications and teaching experience of the respondents, the majority had completed a master's degree and two thirds had more than 20 years of teaching experience. This suggests that most of the participants had good academic qualifications and work experience. In addition, it is interesting to note that all respondents from public schools were trained teachers who had a permanent contract. However, only a few respondents from private schools had a permanent contract.

#### 5.4 Theme 1- School environment and facilities

The researcher gathered information pertaining to the perceptions of the quality of education via in-depth interviews carried out with the head teachers. The themes were created by considering the factors that were prioritised by respondents as having the greatest effect on the quality of teaching. These were then examined in relation to the study's aims, objectives and main research question.

Most of the participants accepted the fact that the school environment and facilities have an impact on the quality of education. The respondents shared their opinion that if the school environment is good and there are proper facilities, this will certainly have an impact on students and enhance the quality of education. Moreover, the teachers felt that support from

the government and local authority could affect the quality of teaching. As per the head teachers' perceptions, the school environment can be categorised into the internal and external environment. According to them, the external environment includes the variables that exist outside the school boundaries but that have an impact on the school. The internal environment includes the specific internal factors within the school.

*"I think the school environment has a major impact on the quality of education. A better school environment can help to encourage students in teaching and learning activities, which helps to improve the quality of education. However, a major problem is unhealthy competition between schools. Schools make use of frequent and excessive advertisements, which are affecting the promotion of quality education. Everyone must understand this reality."*

-Int.12/Pvt/Rurl/M67

Furthermore, there are various factors that are perceived to have an impact on the quality of education, which will be explained as sub-themes below. The themes and sub-themes were created on the basis of head teachers' perceptions, the aims of the study and the research question. The table below shows the number of respondents who addressed these issues and provides the number of references coded in relation to addressing the sub themes.

Table 1. 53: *Details of Theme 1 and sub themes of the in-depth interviews*

<b>Theme 1: Theme 1- School environment and facilities</b>			
<b>S.N</b>	<b>Nodes</b>	<b>No. of Interview Sources</b>	<b>No. of References</b>
<b>1.</b>	Political activities and interference	16	46
<b>2.</b>	Maintaining discipline and counselling	14	31
<b>3.</b>	Infrastructures	13	33
<b>4.</b>	Student-teacher-parent relationship	13	23
<b>5.</b>	Gender and age factors	12	24
<b>6.</b>	School management committee	9	13
<b>7.</b>	Homework, individual care and feedback	7	12



### 5.4.1 Political activities

In this study, the majority of the respondents agreed that political activities and interference have affected the whole education sector. However, this has improved in recent years because of increasing political stability.

Some of the respondents provided their views on the fact that political parties focused their programmes and political activities on pressurising the government by interrupting school education. Regarding this, about two-thirds of the respondents claimed that political influence affects the maintenance of quality education. Moreover, one-third of the participants also revealed that there are various problems that arise as obstacles, such as examinations and tuition fees. According to the respondents from public schools, some students and teachers are also involved in supporting political activities, which affects the quality of teaching and students' academic performance.

*“We have to provide aid to different political parties and their local student unions. If we don't give them aid, they will close the school. It is one of the activities the government should monitor.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents from public schools raised the issue of school management committees. They claimed that there is a strong political pressure to form these committees, which are thought to reduce education quality because of weak management. The majority of the participants agreed that schools should be separated from political activities. Therefore, they suggested that schools and their management should be developed as non-political institutions. For example, one of the participants suggested that:

*“Political activities and instability are obstructing factors for the holistic development of educational activities. Political pressure and donations are creating obstacles and disturbing the psychology of the students. It is the responsibility of the state to take bold decisions and it should create a better environment for better education quality.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Further, the respondents explained that in the selection process of choosing members of the school management committee, local political parties give their priority to those who could play a strong role in favour of those parties, rather than those with school management capabilities. In order to solve this problem, the respondents suggested that the chairs of management committees should not be involved in political matters and should only be concerned with providing a quality education.

*“The major obstacle we face here is the formation of the school management committee. There is strong political influence to form the committee. Sometimes we could not work according to our annual plans due to this interference. This has certainly had a negative effect in our school.”*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

*“To solve the problem, all the persons in society should be conscientious, and teachers should be determined in their mission to shape the career of the students. Schools should be designated as ‘peace zones’ and should always be kept far from political influences. We have put our efforts into this and are trying to address the problem.”*

- Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

The respondents suggested that stakeholders, political parties, parents and teachers should be accountable for children’s education. Some teachers expressed an opinion that it is important for the government to take the bold decision to create an independent executive body for education that is separate from the legislature in order to discourage political interference in the running of schools. This could play a strong role in creating a better educational environment and lead to a better quality of education.

#### **5.4.2 Maintaining students’ discipline**

This study explored the respondents’ views about maintaining discipline and the use of counselling to improve students’ performance. Fourteen participants (3 female and 11 male) from an equal number of public and private, and urban and rural schools, provided their views regarding the problems they faced in maintaining discipline at school. They argued that counselling programs for students and parents, along with the teacher’s role, are effective in solving the problem.

Most of the respondents suggested that maintaining students' discipline helps students to improve their performance in the classroom. This was suggested by one of the respondents:

*"At present, we are not facing such problems. Although some of them used to be rude and misbehave in the class and outside, we treated them with the help of the class teacher and their close friends and also informed their parents in order to improve their behaviour."*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

Some participants also talked about training and related programmes. They suggested that teachers should not take part in any training during school time if there were no spare teachers available to cover their classes. Also, a teacher must be self-disciplined in relation to their approach to work and be a role model with a good personal attitude. One of the respondents explained that:

*"I am a member of teachers' union; however, I am only involved in their activities outside school time. Similarly, I do not participate in any kind of programmes organised by local authorities, societies, political parties and stakeholders. I can participate in training for other school-related programmes only if someone can cover for me and run my classroom activities. I believe that, as a leader, I should be self-confident, disciplined and hardworking."*

–Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

Similarly, one of the respondents discussed the problem of some teachers being unable to maintain discipline and suggested that:

*"Some teachers are unable to control the class. It is seen that while a teacher is teaching, students make noise that directly affects the classroom environment. Here, I can see two problems. First, either the teacher has not prepared the course content well or they have failed to engage students while delivering it in the class."*

–Int.9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

The teachers' perceptions appear to indicate that some students at secondary level are engaged in eliciting activities that not only impact their academic performance but also the school environment. This is an emerging issue related to maintaining students' discipline. In order to control such students and to solve the problem, different respondents have applied different methods of treating them, (i.e., communication with parents, motivating students with encouragement and caring). One of the female teachers shared her experience and revealed that:

*“There were such students, 3 years ago, who engaged in drug use and misbehaved with the teachers and other students. We motivated them to avoid such addictions. As a result, many of them have improved their performance dramatically, whereas the few we could not motivate were expelled from our school.”*

-Int. 5/Pub/Rurl/F52

One of the other female participants from a private school suggested solving the problem through encouragement, care and good direction. These are some of the ways to bring students back to normal learning activities:

*“To be laborious, faithful and responsible can always lead to better education quality. I have one example of a student who was addicted, and his mother asked me to register her son in my school with tears in her eyes. I discussed this for about one hour with that student and decided to admit him. I gave him special care and support to improve his academic performance. Hence, he passed the SLC exam with a good score. Just a year ago when I went to Pokhara, I found out that he had become a pilot.”*

-Int.2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

The findings suggested that there was a perception that teachers and parents play an important role in guiding students towards better performance. However, students also have to maintain their discipline and should focus on their studies.

### 5.4.3 Infrastructures and facilities

The majority of the respondents suggested that the presence of physical infrastructures, teaching tools, equipment and materials help teachers to make their teaching skills more effective, which will also enhance the performance of students.

The findings from the in-depth interviews supported the fact that the majority of the participants perceived that improving the infrastructure of the school would lead to the betterment of the quality of education.

*“We have got a good educational environment and teachers are satisfied, but when compared with other schools, we have got a weak physical infrastructure. It makes me think that lack of infrastructure is affecting education quality as well.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

Likewise, respondents considered poor infrastructures and poor resources in education to be a problem. Some of the participants from private schools commented that they were struggling to construct better physical infrastructures, such as library facilities and other resources, which would improve the teaching and learning environment. They believed that these could be helpful in increasing the number of students. For example:

*“In my opinion, good infrastructure is a positive indicator for parents, and it can attract a high number of students to a school. This has become more evident after the earthquake in Nepal.”*

-Int.4/Pvt/Urbn/M43

Some participants from public schools suggested that poor infrastructures and resources are one of the most challenging factors because they affect the students' psychology, which may lead to poor performance. They suggested that school leaders, teachers and stakeholders should be focused on, and responsible for, the school environment, while the government should provide more funds for better physical infrastructures. In this regard, two respondents suggested that:

*“Stakeholders in private schools are responsible for better infrastructures and are conscious about the facilities they provide to students. In relation to that, we are determined in our duties to make parents happy with the availability of better infrastructures, computer labs and sport materials, which eventually has a positive impact.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

*“The government is supposed to put in place initiatives to encourage parents’ involvement in public schools, while also making plans and policies in order to address the problems of local schools’ resources and infrastructure, and to allocate funds wherever necessary.”*

-Int.8/Pub/Urbn/M53

Furthermore, they argued that the improvement of the physical infrastructure of public schools, along with other facilities, is important for enhancing academic performance. This is only possible with government support. The sources of funds are different in public and private schools: the government provides funds for public schools, whereas parents and other stakeholders invest in private schools.

#### **5.4.4 Student-teacher relationship**

The majority of the respondents agreed that a close or good relationship with students could help in increasing students’ academic performance.

Out of a total of 16 respondents, thirteen participants discussed the relationship between students and teachers. 5 were from public schools and 8 were from private schools in different locations (7 urban and 6 rural). All of them agreed that there should be a good rapport between teachers and students in order to encourage better performance. They also claimed that extra-curricular activities could also help to make these relationships closer:

*“Actually, within school premises, the relationships between teachers and teachers, students and students and teachers and students should be good. The school also provides extra-curricular activities for the overall development of the students and such*

*activities bring teachers and students closer. These also help to regulate the discipline of the students.”*

-Int.4/Pvt/Urbn/M43

However, respondents shared different opinions about this and how it helps to enhance the quality of education. The respondents stated that there must be a triangular relationship between students, teachers and parents in order for effective and fruitful teaching and learning activities to take place, which is something that system theory also recognises (Buzkus, 2014). They suggested that if there is a good and friendly relationship between teachers and students then this would help to create a favorable teaching learning environment. One of the respondents stated that:

*“I think, to maintain a quality education, there must be a triangular relationship between the students, teachers and parents. I feel that one pillar has become weak on the students’ side: that is the lack of focus on their studies. We are always thinking about how to make this triangular relationship stronger.”*

-Int.5/Pub/Rurl/F52

Some of the participants argued that there should be good relationships between teachers and students, but that there should also be distance in order to maintain discipline. For example:

*“There should be student-centred teaching methods and interactions between teachers and students in order to catch the attention of students, e.g., providing course content examples according their interests, but, at the same time, the teacher must create a challenging classroom environment and encourage students to ask questions in the class.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

The respondents suggested that a student-centred pedagogy is an effective teaching method as it allows students to ask questions without hesitation and to actively engage in solving a problem. They perceived that a teacher can help students by giving ideas, feedback and support, which can encourage students in thinking critically about a problem, thus leading to better performance.

#### 5.4.5 Gender and age

In this study, out of 16 participants, 12 participants (2 female and 10 male) from an equal number of public and private schools in different locations (7 urban and 5 rural) commented on this topic. The majority of the participants agreed that age plays a vital role in teaching and learning activities.

In this study, most of the participants disagreed with the view that gender contributes to education quality, although a few shared some different opinions about gender. With regard to age, a common view expressed was that younger teachers could improve the quality of teaching. Some participants stated that the older generation of teachers should be replaced by the younger generation because the younger generation is good at teaching and has knowledge of using new technology.

*“Millennials are quite smart and are concentrated on technology and research. This generation can certainly address the current demands and feelings of students.”*

-Int. 10/Pub/Urbn/M58

However, one of the respondents believed that being a more experienced, older teacher is effective for better performance, because many years of teaching experience provide a teacher with knowledge of students' physiology and knowledge of diverse cultural factors.

*“Older teachers are more experienced and have better knowledge of students, their circumstances and cultural factors, and, if they work hard, it can increase the performance of students; but today's students favour young teachers. However, young teachers must also equip themselves for effective teaching in different environments.”*

-Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

Both male and female participants agreed that female teachers are effective in junior classes. One respondent shared his opinion that:

*“I don't think gender plays a big role, but, at primary level, the presence of female teachers is a plus point for handling students because of their lovely behaviour towards the children. This makes a positive impact upon the children. When we come to*



*secondary level, gender doesn't play any role, but a commanding attitude plays a big role."*

-Int.1/Pub/Urbn/M46

It is interesting to note that some of the male participants were in favour of male teachers and female teachers argued in favour of female teachers. A male respondent said that:

*"I have found the performance and activity-levels of male teachers is better than that of female teachers. I am not trying to blame and dominate anybody else, but I must say that our society is a male-dominated society. To be honest, I don't find female teachers active and creative."*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

A female respondent voiced the following view:

*"I don't like to go far and say it depends on the situation of school. My major point is that the very first school of children is the home. The first teacher is the mother. From the beginning, the mother nurtures the children, develops the habits of the children and knows about different things than the male (father). I mean to say, females have got more information on how to teach and handle the students. I feel the performance of females can be improved by acknowledging the feelings of students."*

-Int.5/Pub/Rurl/F52

Both male and female respondents argued in favour of their gender with regard to the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities.

#### **5.4.6 Homework, feedback and individual care**

The majority of the participants believed that homework, feedback and the individual care of students encourages them to enhance their performance. Seven participants (6 male and 1 female) from both public and private schools (3 public and 4 private) in different locations (urban and rural) commented on this topic. They argued that if a teacher can provide proper care, homework and feedback, along with having a good relationship with students, then students can be encouraged to concentrate on their tasks and improve their performance.

*“A teacher should always be attentive towards students’ homework by checking and giving feedback. Most importantly, students should be given individual care and provided with a favourable classroom environment, which is part of student-centred teaching pedagogy. Feedback for the students can also help to improve the quality of education.”*

-Int.9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

Some of the participants suggested that if a student could not complete homework, he/she should be treated in a positive way, e.g., through motivation and encouragement them rather than punishment.

*“Paying attention to the homework of students and giving feedback can make students active and provide better performance. We do not give punishments to the students; rather, we focus on motivation and counselling. We are encouraging the students towards study only through positive approaches.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

According to the findings, almost all of the teachers seemed to suggest that classroom activities are effective if there is a system of checking homework and giving feedback and suggestions. This individual care helps students to have a better understanding and motivates them to engage in learning activities. However, one of the respondents expressed a different opinion; namely, that in-course assessment, e.g., peer activities, could be very effective in motivating students and encouraging better engagement in the classroom.

This theme and sub-themes supported the fact that a good school environment and facilities play a vital role in promoting the quality of education. However, the respondents suggested that schools should be separated from all kinds of political activities and that school management committees should be developed as non-political institutes in order to promote the quality of education. Furthermore, head teachers also perceived that schools with good infrastructures provide good facilities, along with the fact that good teacher-student relationships and teacher discipline are factors that can have an effect on improving students’ performance. Gender was not found to be very important. However, respondents seemed to suggest that the use of innovative methods and new technologies were also essential factors

that could boost the quality of education. Homework, feedback and individual care for students would encourage them to pay attention to teaching and learning activities.

## 5.5 Theme 2 - Teaching and learning activities and resources

The teacher can have an impact on students' academic performance and teaching is one of the objectives in this study. This study examined learning resources and facilities within the study population. A number of sub-headings emerged during the interviews: information and communications technology (ICT), extra classes and activities, schools' financial situation, tuition fees, English medium classes (i.e., teaching and learning using the English language), teachers' salaries, their motivation and satisfaction, textbooks, the availability of electricity, library facilities, resource management and class size.

Table 1. 54: *Details of Theme 2 and sub-themes from the in-depth interviews*

<b>Theme 2: Teaching and learning activities and resource management</b>			
<b>S.N</b>	<b>Nodes</b>	<b>No. of Interview Sources</b>	<b>No. of References</b>
1.	Information and communications technology (ICT)	15	48
2.	Extra classes and activities	11	22
3.	Schools' financial condition and tuition fee issues	10	16
4.	Teaching in the English language	8	17
5.	Salaries, motivation and satisfaction	8	11
6.	Teachers, textbooks and availability of electricity	10	22
7.	Library and resource management	5	5
8.	Class size	4	5

The majority of the public school head teachers stated that education is free in government schools and added that they do not have enough resources, facilities and infrastructures. The teachers' responses indicated their feelings that if the government provided enough resources, technology, infrastructures, training for teachers and other facilities, then the status of public schools could be as high as that of private schools. One of the participants from a public school argued that the resources and facilities available for teaching and learning help to enhance the quality of teaching:

*“It is said that education is free for public schools, but we don’t have enough resources to make it free. This is one of the great problems that we are facing nowadays. If the government could manage enough resources and teachers, then we could admit students without entrance exams.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

After further discussion with the interviewees, it was found that they felt that schools do not have enough resources and infrastructures and that there is a high pressure to admit students. The aforementioned respondent further indicated that the government must provide all the facilities necessary for a quality school education in order to help to promote the quality of education. Similarly, one of the participants suggested that:

*“To maintain better student performance, the government must provide proper facilities in terms of the school environment, physical infrastructures and required resources.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

Participants also raised the issue of government policy and its implementation. They argued that there must be a change in government plans, policy and regulations in order to meet the needs of the current generation. This would make it easier for them to be implemented. One of the respondents said that:

*“Before making plans, the policymakers must be conscious about the required resources, infrastructures and social conditions and provide enough teaching and learning materials so that the implementation part can be easier.”*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

In this regard, some of the participants suggested that students need access to more learning facilities and new technology in order to improve their performance.

The respondents concluded that, in their opinion, modern teaching methods (i.e., student-centred) and the use of new technologies would be effective in the classroom. However, they stated that they could not manage such equipment due to poor facilities and resources and also as a result of the time pressures resulting from the government curriculum. Most of the

respondents seemed to suggest that effective resource management by schools would enhance the performance of both teachers and students. The respondents further believed that the physical resources of the school should be managed properly. Furthermore, they perceived that teaching and learning activities and resource management play an important role in the running of teaching and learning activities, and that they also enhance students' performance.

### **5.5.1 Information and communications technology (ICT)**

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) is one of the crucial factors for enhancing the quality of education (Dahal & Dahal, 2015). In this regard, most of the participants addressed this topic and a variety of views were expressed. The majority claimed that there must be proper facilities for ICT, including a computer lab, science lab, library and an e-library. They also believed that audio-visual classes conducted with the active and equal participation of students have a positive impact on teaching learning activities.

*“We are just starting to implement the concept of [conducting] teaching and learning activities by using ICT, e.g., the use of a computer lab, science lab, library, and e-library. We have already developed a simple infrastructure to utilise the facilities that are available now.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

*“We have adopted different methods for teaching, like group discussion, teaching through the use of a projector, multimedia classes, positive counselling of the students, and so on. The regular computer class has been a great help with this. So far, technology has helped students to engage more with the course content because of the newness of the teaching method. It also has positive effects on examination results.”*

-Int.04/Pvt/Urbn/M43

One of the participants from a private school shared that they were using ICT in teaching and learning activities but admitted that public schools cannot use technology because of poor resources. Similarly, another participant from a private school stated that they had been using modern teaching methods in school. Teachers' perceptions supported the fact that the use of technology in teaching and learning is both effective and supportive when it comes to

enhancing students' performance; as it enables students to go on to compete in the global market.

*"We have given priority to teaching classes with audio-visual technologies and to focus on information technology (IT) classes. Because of this, students from our school can compete on an international level."*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Some of the participants identified some negative impacts of ICT on the quality of education. They believed that students were misusing technology and social media, particularly after or before school time, which was affecting their performance.

*"There is no problem regarding the use of technology inside school, but we must concentrate on how to create a good environment outside the school. Students are misusing TV, mobile phones and social media and this has negative effects on their studies."*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

The respondent's negative perception of technology and social media stemmed from their belief that students were interested playing games and also engaging in different non-productive social activities instead of focusing on study. The respondent suggested that parents should be attentive about the academic use of technology. However, some of the respondents believed that the proper use of technology, electronic devices and social media could be helpful for students' learning activities. Teachers and parents can control the misuse of these things by monitoring the students and their engagement.

*"Students should be provided with a laptop, computer and other electronic devices so that they can learn in more effective and interesting ways that help them to solve problems. To overcome the problem of the misuse of technology, we are now totally careful about students' activities and have requested parents to monitor children in their home. In school too, the students are kept under our supervision. More importantly, the students in the secondary level group should be engaged in educational activities to reduce the misuse of technology."*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

*“Parents should monitor their children and control the misuse of social media, technology, mobile games and TV serials.”*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

One of the male participants from a private school in an urban area had a different vision about the use of online media for students:

*“I had one idea, which was to support the students by providing an online service. Here, we join the respective subject teacher with the student through email, Facebook Messenger and phone. Students are encouraged to ask questions relating to the subject matter and to state where they are stuck in order to solve the problem. This idea is being effectively used and students are also being encouraged.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

He further stated that teachers respond to students as soon as possible in order to solve problems. Many schools were using information and communications technology. The head teachers revealed that the use of technology and social media to encourage students to learn has been popular and that it has been found to be effective as a problem-solving tool.

It was found via the interviews with teachers that they believed the use of online platforms could be useful for study purposes. Schools have been using information and communications technology for study purposes. In recent times, the use of technology and social media to encourage students to learn has been popular and it has been found to be an effective technique. Modern technologies have both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages can be acquired from the proper use of such technologies. The improper use of modern technologies affects the performance of students to a greater extent, however, which can have negative results in the long term. Furthermore, the respondents suggested that there is a need for a higher level of supervision from teachers at school and parents at home.

### **5.5.2 Extra classes and activities**

The majority of the respondents claimed that devoting extra classes and time to supporting weak students could have an impact on their performance, which would help them to pass

examinations. For example, one of the participants from a public school shared his ideas about extra classes and support:

*“The most important thing is that we offer after-hours teaching in school to teach those students who are struggling to perform better and want to improve their performance. Furthermore, we offer a weekly written exam and give them feedback, support and care.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

The respondent also suggested that the government should be responsible for economic support and that teachers must provide care for students. His school had been managing to teach and support weak students by providing tuition and coaching both before and after school.

*“...We are working to provide tuition and coaching classes for weak students and to work on making teaching and learning activities more effective through the adoption of different training, teaching methods, and so on.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

The respondents believed that the maximum utilisation of human resources could boost students' academic performance. On top of that, one of the respondents shared a story of the success achieved by offering extra classes and providing good care for students:

*“We inspect the students and provide good care for the weak students. For example, in the very first year that students attempted the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination, we gained the best result in western Chitwan. This had a good impact on our school. We are becoming more conscious about the situation of students. We offer extra classes for the weak students.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

One of the respondents stated that some parents had suggested that extra classes for students should be provided in school. Now, the school is offering an extra two hours' teaching (both before and after school) to support weak students:



*“We have gathered some suggestions from parents about how to manage extra classes for the students so that they spend most of their time in school involved in academic activities. In particular, these arrangements for extra classes are targeted at secondary level students. So, these factors compelled us to offer extra classes.”*

-Int. 5/Pub/Rurl/F52

Some of the respondents focused their discussion on the provision of extra-curricular activities, like sports, dance, speech competitions, etc. It is interesting to note that many felt that parents are quite unhappy with these types of extra activities. One respondent shared her experience that:

*“The parents think that extra-curricular activities will not help the children, but we are making them aware of the importance of extra activities [...] According to the desires of students I am managing extra activities, like dance classes, singing, art classes and speech competitions, which have been so effective.”*

-Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

The findings could suggest that the respondents felt those extra classes and other activities, like dance, speech competitions, singing, arts and sports, encouraged pupils in their learning activities. Similarly, the interview findings also revealed that schools are making an effort to enhance student performance by offering extra classes, tuition and by implementing effective teaching methods. On the basis of the teachers' responses, it can be noted that they viewed extra classes and activities as a way of ensuring that students who were not getting attention before were now getting more attention. The teachers indicated that special attention is given to weak students in the extra classes in order to support their learning activities.

### **5.5.3 Schools' financial condition and tuition fee issues**

Ten respondents from both public and private schools (6 public and 4 private) addressed the issue of schools' financial situations and tuition fees in their comments representing different locations (7 urban and 3 rural). Most of the respondents from public schools stated that they do not have sufficient funds to even run regular classes with good facilities. They said that there was a lack of resources, infrastructures and teachers.

*“I feel I should improve the physical infrastructures, computer labs and technology. Modern technologies are used to make students competitive in the market. I am working on starting audio-visual classes for students to give them a better understanding. But, to be honest, we have failed to meet our target because of the poor financial situation.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

One of the respondents informed the researcher that their school had become successful in collecting economic resources at the local level, which helped them to maintain the quality of education.

*“We are collecting funds and resources. We are extending our school up to higher secondary level and coordinating with the stakeholders.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

However, the study revealed that most of the respondents faced difficulties from different political parties while trying to collect money in fees.

*“[In order to] manage the teachers, using our private resources, we have to take fees from students. When taking tuition fees, we often face obstacles from different political parties that disturb the activities of teaching and learning in school. These can be called a discouraging factor for quality education.”*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

Most of the time, parents, political parties and even students were in disagreement about fee increases. If a school decided to take even a small amount more in fees in order to improve the quality of teaching, union representatives disrupted classes until the school decided not to charge these additional fees. The respondents further explained that if a school increases its tuition fees, political leaders stand against this and the school management couldn't collect extra funds to cover other expenses in their quest to increase education quality.

Thus, some of the participants' perceptions were that weaknesses in government policy and its implementation do not support the creation of a good teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, there was not any support from the government for the management of non-teaching staff. However, one of the respondents from a private school informed the researcher that they faced the same problem as public schools and that they were trying to solve the problem at the local level:

*“Our main focus is ‘How do we provide a high standard of education?’. Challenging situations arise that affect the teaching and learning environment, but we solve these problems by conducting meetings with parents. We have a teachers’ union that deals with the problems related with policy level. Increasing fees is only possible with the agreement of school, teachers and guardians.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

Furthermore, the respondent stated that these types of activities could affect the students’ psychology and teachers’ sincerity, which definitely hampers school education. According to the teachers’ views, there has to be an agreement between the school, parents and students’ union before fees are increased. However, schools should remain committed in terms of providing extra classes and facilities according to students’ needs. Furthermore, the participants seemed to suggest in order improving the quality of education the government should also support schools.

#### **5.5.4 English medium classes in public schools**

This study found that the teachers were of the opinion that English medium classes (i.e., teaching using the English language) are one of the issues vital for maintaining the quality of education nowadays. According to the in-depth interviews, public schools are struggling to run classes in English as they are suffering from poor resources and economic scarcity. Private schools are forcing teachers and students to use the English language for communicating and also for teaching and learning activities. Half of the participants provided responses on this topic. For example, one of the participants suggested that:

*“We have seen some good students being attracted to classes in the English language [as they want] to compete with international manpower. We are conducting classes in English at primary level as per government policy and we have decided, in the coming days, to conduct classes in the English language at all levels. It would be easier to run*

*the classes if the government provided additional support by sending English teachers or allocating additional funds.”*

-Int.01/Pub/Urbn/M46

It could be surmised from the teachers’ reports that English has been given priority in Nepal because it is an international language. Accordingly, schools are adopting the English language as a medium for communicating with students. However, a number of the respondents informed the researcher of the fact that public schools are struggling to operate as English-speaking schools due to the lack of English language teachers. To solve this problem, the respondents suggested that the government should pay attention to this issue.

*“Parents are attracted to English schools, where teachers only allow [the use of the] English language to teach in class. This means it is quite clear that there is much more attraction to private schools [...]. We have also started to teach in English in classes up to grade 6, but we are lacking the resources for this. [If we are] to extend teaching in the English language to secondary level, it will be very difficult to manage resources, devices and even manpower.”*

-Int.07/Pub/Rurl/M54

The teachers’ responses indicated that they were of the opinion that most parents wanted to send their children to private school. This was because all the private schools offered teaching in English as they had enough teachers to do so. However, public schools do not have enough teachers to teach in English. As per government policy, any public school can run classes in English, although schools have not received additional funds to hire teachers.

One of the participants indicated that there is a problem stemming from the fact that there is no English textbook available from the government that can be used in public schools. The government distributes free books in Nepali; however, both public and private schools have to buy their own English textbooks.

*“Students studying in Nepali get all the textbooks with no costs, but students studying in English have to pay for their textbooks. For them too, the government should arrange for these books to be free of cost, because it is essential to use both languages (i.e.,*

*Nepali and English) in teaching. We are using the same textbooks that are being taught in private schools.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

Regarding the speaking English in schools, it is interesting to note that one of the female respondents from a private school stated that some teachers prefer to speak only Nepali:

*“I have just remembered one incident. We made a rule to speak English in the schools in our area, except when teaching Nepali subjects, but some teachers preferred to speak only in Nepali. This happened because of a lack of confidence and hesitation in speaking English, but slowly they would get on track. When a school environment becomes English then there won’t be any language problems and the children can easily speak, write and understand the language.”*

-Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

The findings of this study in to the teachers’ perceptions suggested that there are not sufficient numbers of English teachers in public schools and that head teachers are struggling to manage English language classes. The findings seem to suggest that there is a need for language training for teachers in public schools, as the English language has become mandatory for today’s generation. Regarding the curriculum and textbooks, the respondents suggested to the government that textbooks should be in English and that they should be provided for free to students.

#### **5.5.5 Salary, motivation and satisfaction of teachers**

This research also attempted to find out head teachers’ opinions about whether or not teachers’ salaries, motivation and satisfaction have an impact on the quality of teaching. 50% of the participants made comments on this issue. They were from public and private schools (2 public and 6 private) in both locations (5 urban and 3 rural). They agreed that a reasonable salary, training and motivation help to encourage teachers to enhance teaching quality, thereby supporting students’ performance. A private school head teacher from a rural area mentioned that:

*“We expect better services from teachers, so we must make them happy by fulfilling their needs and giving them a salary according to the national pay scale. Apart from this, we offer refreshment training and visit teachers from time to time to find out about, and solve, their problems. We have even provided a bonus for them on a monthly basis to encourage them.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Some of the respondents shared that they had been listening to teachers’ suggestions regarding the development of their school and that they were merging these suggestions with their own ideas. They also motivated teachers by rewarding them (e.g., giving cash prizes, awards, bonuses, certificates, etc.) on the basis of their contributions and dedication to teaching for the betterment of the school.

*“At the beginning of the session, we listen to teachers’ grievances, along with their new ideas for the betterment of school. We also reward teachers for their contribution and dedication to teaching. We encourage our teachers with different sorts of tools. The salary provided to our teachers is less than the salary provided to teachers in our neighbouring countries. As far as I know, I have made them happy and they are also satisfied with the school’s facilities.”*

-Int.07/Pub/Rurl/M54

One of the female respondents from an urban area accepted that she could not manage to provide salaries as per the government scale, because it is very difficult to collect money in tuition fees from parents.

*“We have to look at both the satisfaction of teachers and developing the infrastructures. This is the reason we cannot provide salaries as per the government scale. If we increase fees, complaints start coming in from the guardians, which may affect the teachers’ mind-set and educational activities.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

This respondent stated that the reason that teachers leave the school is not only down to the fact that they receive a lower salary, but because they will find better opportunities in other fields:

*“I don’t think they depart from here only because of having a lower salary. Some teachers left the school because of better opportunities in other sectors. There were some teachers who were not happy with our management too and so left the school. But in most of the cases, they left the school after getting better opportunities in other fields, rather than it being due to a defect on the school’s part.”*

-Int. 3/Pvt/Urbn/M43

According to the findings, the respondents felt that teachers’ motivation is an important factor when it comes to the quality of education. They perceived that if a teacher is satisfied with their salary and the provided facilities, they would devote their full efforts to improving the quality of education. Rewards, increasing salaries and the opportunity for training and refreshment programmes have been provided to teachers to encourage them to work hard, be honest to the profession and to develop a good and progressive culture of teaching and learning. Hence, the teachers perceived that the performance of teachers largely depends on motivational factors.

#### **5.5.6 Teacher, textbook and electricity unavailability**

This study found that the respondents’ perceptions were that there were insufficient numbers of subject teachers and the delayed availability of textbooks in public schools are challenging factors. Both public and private schools are suffering from load shedding (i.e., the unavailability of electricity), which means that there is no light for most of the school day. This affects schools in both rural and urban areas. Ten respondents (9 male and 1 female) commented on the issue of teacher, textbook and electricity unavailability in both public and private schools.

Regarding the lack of teachers in public schools, a number of respondents stated that they had made many requests to the government authorities, but that there had been no response. The respondents suggested that this difficult situation could be managed for the time being by hiring a small number of teachers and paying them using the internal income sources of the school.

However, this would not solve the problem permanently. For example, one of the newly appointed head teachers stated that:

*“The next problem is the unavailability of required teachers for the students. I was working as a science teacher, but when I became head teacher, I could not find enough time for the classes and we didn’t have any other alternative teacher to teach science instead of me. I have informed the District Education Office about this problem but no solution has been found.”*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

Some of the respondents perceived that unfairness was shown when placing teachers in different schools. Furthermore, they indicated their views that the implementation of government policy, rules and regulations is always found to be weak:

*“No teachers are allocated according to the need of the school by the government. There is discrimination regarding the posting of teachers. Some schools have more numbers of teachers even though they have fewer numbers of students, while, in some schools, there are more students but a much lower availability of teachers.”*

–Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

In this regard, a female head teacher of a public school mentioned that classes remain vacant due to the lack of teachers, which is a major problem for public schools when it comes to maintaining the quality of education. This head teacher suggested that the government should manage resources and provide enough teachers to run schools smoothly, which would result in better student performance.

Regarding textbook availability, just two respondents from public schools raised this as being an issue. For example one of the participants suggested that the government should send textbooks in time:

*“We were told that the government would provide free textbooks, but we could not get them in time, which directly affects teaching and learning activities. We have to face all these problems, which directly affect students’ performance too.”*



Most importantly, one third of the participants discussed the problem of load shedding. This leads to difficulties in conducting morning and evening classes and in using electrical equipment. For example, two respondents stated that:

*“The problem of load shedding is also challenging: we face problems with running electrical appliances. Alternative resources of energy should be managed in order to solve the problem of load shedding.”*

-Int.01/Pub/Urbn/M46 & Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

In this regard, one of the respondents from a public school suggested that the government should provide financial support so that schools could install alternative sources of energy.

Many of the respondents suggested that public schools are struggling due to a lack of resource management. Thus, teacher availability, textbook insufficiency and electricity issues are regarded as being a major problem for public schools in Nepal. This is one of the reasons identified by teachers as contributing to poor performance.

### **5.5.7 Library and resource management**

This research found that there is lack of library materials and other resources, such as an e-library, science lab and computer lab. A quarter of participants from public schools made comments on this topic. They informed the researcher that in order to provide a quality education, they need more resources.

*“Though we get rules, regulations and direction from the government side, we are unable to get [the] necessary equipment from them. [Although] the government provides some help, which it is not sufficient. As we cannot take any fees from students, it is very difficult to manage the science lab, library and e-library in the school. Now, we are trying to convince the students’ guardians about this lack [of resources], and we think they will be able to understand.”*

-Int.07/Pub/Rurl/M54

The respondents also stated that they are struggling to provide e-libraries with the help of local people and the government. The teachers' perceptions was that e-libraries will help students to gain more knowledge and information regarding their subjects. Moreover, they felt that online Internet services should be available in e-libraries.

#### **5.5.8 Class size**

In this study, some of the respondents made comments about class size, which is one of the challenges when it comes to enhancing the quality of education. Some head teachers commented on the fact that there are lots of students in classes because of a lack of teachers, infrastructures and resources.

One of the respondents from a public school stated that they were having problems running a student-centered teaching and learning approach—with the aim of providing equal chances to students—because of larger class sizes. The respondent informed the researcher that:

*“In a classroom, we are supposed to teach not more than 40 students, but we are obliged to teach 60-70 students in a classroom due to the lack of sufficient numbers of classrooms in our school. Although the government makes better plans and policies, we are suffering from a lack of infrastructure, teachers and resources.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

However, a respondent from a private school stated that there were no problems associated with class size:

*“We do not teach more than 35 students, which means we can give individual care, apply a student-centred approach and make students participate equally in class activities, which helps students to perform better.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

The study revealed teachers' perceptions that class size is one of the major factors that contribute to the quality of education. A small size of class leads to a favourable teaching and learning environment. Large class sizes create problems, especially in public schools, because it is difficult to implement a student-centred approach.

To sum up, the findings from the in-depth interviews informed the researcher that there are many challenging factors involved in enhancing students' academic performance. Facilities and the use of ICT, extra classes and activities, teaching in the English language, financial support, teachers' motivation and other resources should be provided, but this study found these to be lacking, especially in public secondary schools. However, teachers perceived that private schools were better equipped in terms of the facilities they provided in order to boost students' academic performance.

### 5.6 Theme 3 - Professionalism

This study also intended to explore whether or not teaching quality includes integrity, dedication to the profession, hard work, teamwork, pedagogy, academic qualifications, experience and teachers' personal teaching skills. It sought to examine whether these qualities could contribute to enhancing students' performance.

The respondents addressed these issues by stating their views. The majority argued that there is a significant relationship between the nodes mentioned below when it comes to maintaining and enhancing the quality of education. The nodes mentioned in Table 55 are academic qualifications, experience, teacher training and teachers' characteristics. Likewise, willpower, teamwork, subject matter knowledge and teaching methods are also related to the enhancement of the quality of education. The theme and sub-themes developed on the basis of the teachers' perceptions are presented in the table below.

Table 1. 55: *Details of Theme 3 and sub-themes of the in-depth interviews*

<b>Theme 3: Teaching and learning activities and resource management</b>			
<b>S.N</b>	<b>Nodes</b>	<b>No. of Interview Sources</b>	<b>No. of References</b>
<b>1.</b>	Professionalism (i.e., willpower, honesty, faithfulness, commitment and hard work)	16	56
<b>2.</b>	Teacher training	16	36
<b>3.</b>	Teaching experience	14	25
<b>4.</b>	Academic qualifications	13	18
<b>5.</b>	Teaching and learning methods	14	37
<b>6.</b>	Characteristics of teachers	13	48

The majority of the respondents emphasised the importance of the professionalism of teachers, including their honesty, faithfulness, hard work and commitment. According to the respondents, they believed that if a teacher exhibits such characteristics, s/he can achieve better results in terms of students' performance. Such attributes help to increase the self-confidence of students and help to improve education quality.

#### **5.6.1 Professionalism (i.e., willpower, honesty, faithfulness, commitment and hard work)**

The information gathered from the in-depth interviews showed that all of the respondents were concerned about, and agreed on, the importance of professionalism, honesty and faithfulness to their profession, along with the importance of commitment and hard work. These factors definitely play a vital role in improving the quality of education. It is important to note that all the participants made comments on this topic by stating different opinions about teachers' professionalism, which included the discussion of teachers' roles and their responsibilities for school education.

*“Teachers who teach others should realise their responsibility and should be honest to their profession. They should have a strong commitment to how they can provide a quality education and change their society with the knowledge they have provided to the students.”*

-Int.1/Pub/Urbn/M46

In this study, some of the respondents from public schools stated their belief that there is lack of faithfulness among public school teachers. The respondents claimed that they are not found to be honest in terms of their profession, which is why they do not have a habit of working hard.

*“Public school teachers are never professionally faithful. They should have willpower and a hardworking culture that helps to promote education quality. Leaving the class early and coming to the class late are some of the points that are so dangerous to the quality of education [...] If we have willpower, we can certainly work for improvement. I am continuously working on my efforts.”*

-Int.4/Pvt/Urbn/M43

Similarly, one of the respondents from a private school shared his views about teachers and their activities. He felt that teachers are not honest in terms of their work and responsibilities, and that this is one of the reasons for the poor academic performance of students.

*“The public doubts teaching to be a job that makes someone well off in society. Similarly, hiring and firing is very common in the workplace and being close to the management is one of the ways to secure your job. So, it is very difficult for someone to be totally honest. No teacher can stay permanently in the private field. I found that more than 100 teachers have come and gone in the last 20 years. I think this is also one of the drawbacks for maintaining a quality education.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

Some of the respondents discussed teachers’ duties and responsibilities in relation to students’ teaching and learning. They stated that these are important factors when it comes to teaching and learning activities. For example, one respondent said that:

*“A teacher who presents themselves better in the class, performs project work related to his teaching topic and who has learning habits makes him/herself perform well in class. Along with this, a teacher should maintain his/her educational and professional status in society.”*

-Int.5/Pub/Rurl/F52

During the interviews, one of the respondents talked about self-motivation, teamwork and dedication to their work. In their opinion, these factors make teachers more professional. The respondent further added that teachers should develop effective teaching methods in order to enhance students’ academic performance. Following the norms of the teaching profession would enable teachers to do this.

*“Besides this, he/she must be dedicated, self-confident and self-motivated. Teamwork and responsibility play a great role. Teachers should make their students more involved and engaged, as this will make the student active in their learning.”*

-Int.6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

Overall, this study's participants perceived that a culture of active work, teamwork, hard work, discipline and respect for their profession, in addition to being responsible, hardworking and creative, is essential to being a good teacher and offering a high quality of teaching. Moreover, one of the respondents suggested that professional faithfulness; willpower, self-confidence and self-motivation might be crucial factors for enhancing education quality.

### **5.6.2 Teacher training**

Teacher training was discussed in this study to find out its impact on students' academic performance. Respondents believed that teacher training and refreshment programmes could make teachers more confident in providing effective teaching that would be helpful when it came to supporting students.

One of the respondents from a public school shared their belief that training and experience make a teacher more qualified in terms of effective teaching. They stated that teachers should implement that what they had learnt from training:

*“The teachers here are always up to date in implementing the lessons learnt from the training. The teachers share their training notes among themselves, which ultimately brings positive changes in teaching and learning activities.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

However, one of the respondents stated that teachers are given various opportunities to engage in personal development but that they fail to implement their experiences in class:

*“In order to enhance teaching quality, training has an important role. It all depends upon its implementation. We have found recently that teachers participated in several training programmes, but that they teach in their own traditional method anyway.”*

-Int.9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

The feedback from the teachers makes clear their perceptions in the fact that teacher training is useful for improving students' performance. However, there seemed to be a suggestion that a teacher has ample opportunities to implement the skills gained from training in the practical field.

Likewise, some of the respondents stated that teacher training provides teachers with better teaching methods and makes them more responsible and professionally faithful. It could be surmised that there was a suggestion that willpower and motivation can only be promoted through training. Providing training is not only about learning and teaching methods.

*“Although the teachers are qualified, if we can provide them with further opportunities for their professional development, then they can contribute to improving students’ performance. Through training, we can make them responsible and professionally faithful. If training is implemented, it can contribute to teaching and learning activities.”*

-Int.12/Pvt/Urbn/M67

Some of the respondents from private schools informed the researcher that the government didn’t provide support for conducting teacher training in private schools. If the government provided this opportunity, then private school teachers could also develop their teaching skills, which they perceived would be fruitful for students.

*“We are following the rules and regulations of the government but are not able to get the training managed by the government. So, training should be provided by the government to private schools, which would help them to implement government plans and policies in private schools as well.”*

-Int.13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

*“Teachers are given training on teaching pedagogy, which can motivate them and develop the feeling of learning by doing that increases the activities of students. If we can focus on these matters, we will not be far away from providing a quality education.”*

-Int.6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

Most of the respondents agreed that training is related to the nature of teaching as an art and that it can be developed through new techniques and approaches to teaching. One of the methods is learning by doing, where students develop their cognitive skills by trying things for themselves. It was found, according to the teachers interviewed, that they perceived that

schools should primarily focus on providing training and professional development programmes in order to enhance the quality of teaching.

### 5.6.3 Teaching experience

Teachers' teaching experience has been examined in this study in order to identify its relationship to students' academic performance. Almost all respondents agreed that teaching experience is a major factor that makes a teacher more qualified in terms of effective teaching. However, experience does not mean the years of contribution to the field, but the knowledge accumulated in those years.

*“Experience is compulsory for quality education. But along with experience there must be research, hard work and the practical use of experience, which can only enhance teaching quality. In my experience, I am always placing an emphasis on the practical use of experience and the habit of hard work as being compulsory tools for effective teaching.”*

-Int.13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Likewise, one of the female respondents further discussed the relationship between teaching experience and its implementation in the classroom. She suggested that teachers should update their skills by gaining new and additional knowledge and by applying effective methods in teaching that lead to an effective teaching and learning environment.

*“I have got good experience and I can understand the students' demands. Experienced teachers know how to tackle problems in due course, treat students and adopt various teaching methods.”*

-Int.9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

In this regard, one of the female respondents argued that experience is essential for teaching. However, she believed that a more experienced teacher with less enthusiasm could have a negative impact on teaching and learning activities because of their inactivity and tiredness.

*“Obviously, experience is a great part of teaching. Teachers' experience provides them with additional knowledge for teaching by using different methods. But talking about*



*the teachers who are full of experience (i.e., more than 20 years in teaching), the teaching and learning activities from them may not necessarily address the present needs of students and management, because such teachers become passive and tired of their profession.”*

-Int.5/Pub/Rurl/F52

A few of the respondents were of the opinion that older teachers follow set patterns of teaching after many years in the same profession. However, most of the respondents perceived that the higher the experience level of a teacher was, the better the quality of education on offer would be.

The findings suggested that most teachers in public schools were experienced and that they participated in various personal development programmes. However, the problem is that they are teaching the same content to their students that they were teaching years ago. This does not increase the quality of education. Hence, the respondents perceived that teachers should update their skills by gaining new knowledge and learning new techniques in order to increase the quality of education.

#### **5.6.4 Academic qualifications**

This study attempted to explore respondents' perspectives regarding academic qualifications and their overall impact on students' performance. It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents (9 from urban and 4 from rural areas) agreed that a higher level of academic qualifications is beneficial. However, they proposed that this also depends on teachers' study habits, preparation, personality, teaching skill, responsibility and faithfulness to their profession.

*“All the teachers were selected and came into the teaching field after completing certain processes (i.e., qualifications, training and teaching skills). If they concentrate on the skills of class control, then they can be effective. Higher professional qualifications certainly do have additional advantages when it comes to promoting students' performance.”*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

Similarly, one of the respondents from a private school seemed to suggest that higher academic qualifications gave teachers some more knowledge about the subject matter, but that this would very much depend on the teachers' study habits and preparation. He argued that most public schools achieve poorer results when compared to private schools:

*“There is a certain role for qualifications and experience, but the teachers in public schools are qualified, trained and experienced, even though they cannot bring out better results.”*

-Int. 8/Pub/Urbn/M53

This respondent pointed out the fact that teachers in the public sector have qualifications and is trained, and his perception was that they struggle to improve the quality of education. One of the respondents shared his experiences about his struggles, saying that:

*“You have made me remember my past and my on-going working habits. I was engaged in the teaching profession after I completed my intermediate level of education. I have got my bachelor's degree and passed my master's degree during my career, which has allowed me to continue my teaching career at secondary level in an effective manner.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

This could suggest that continuous professional development (CPD) is effective for a teacher if they want to enhance their teaching career. Most of the respondents agreed on this topic, as they perceived that the academic qualifications of teachers play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of students.

### **5.6.5 Teaching and learning methods**

The teachers perceived that effective teaching methods play a vital role in improving the teaching and learning activities that enhance students' academic performance. Furthermore, it was argued that teachers should remain up to date with new knowledge and techniques in order to provide effective teaching. The majority of the respondents believed that the use of technology encourages students to explore their ideas and that group discussions make classes more effective.

In this regard, 14 respondents (including all the female respondents) made comments on the topic of teaching and learning methods and their impact on students' performance. All of the respondents were in favour of the student-centred teaching approach, rather than the teacher-centred approach. Most of them stated that they found that their students were encouraged to explore their ideas and knowledge through equal participation in class when such methods were implemented. One respondent said that:

*"I was told that the teaching method should always be student-centred. In the teaching and learning process, there must be more student participation and the teacher should provide feedback to them. If we can involve the students actively through the use of different media and technology, then the teaching and learning activities can be effective."*

-Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

One of the respondents supported the notion that when students are taught with a proper method of teaching, they can compete everywhere—even in the global market. Additionally, it was easy to apply the student-centred approach both in small or large classes. Another respondent shared his ideas as follows:

*"You know that if we cannot change the traditional methods of teaching, we cannot compete in the national and international market. That is why we are trying our best to make students more active participants in the teaching and learning method."*

-Int. 1/Pub/Ubrn/M46

According to the above respondent, a competitive, creative and active teacher can change the traditional mode of teaching, which as he perceived it, will help students to compete in the local and global markets. He further explored his ideas about how to manage large groups of students in order to apply the student-centred approach:

*"It can be possible even if the class size is large or small. For a larger class, we can divide the class into different groups with a student leader in each group. The students' views can be summarised and presented to the class with the help of the leader. This can make students more creative and they can actively participate in the class."*

All the respondents were in favour of a student-centred method of teaching that makes use of technology, in which every student gets a chance to be involved in learning and to explore their ideas and understanding about the subject matter. He further believed that the student-centred (i.e., learned-centred) method was effective in preparing students for learning and that they should also be given the opportunity to discuss things with their peer group in order to find solutions.

All of the respondents who commented on this topic voiced the opinion that they were against the traditional method of teaching (i.e., the teacher-centred method). They further suggested that if teachers ignore the innovative ideas of technology-led teaching and students' engagement, then teaching couldn't be effective. One of the respondents argued that the teacher-centred method of teaching involves one-way traffic, which is not effective in classroom. She stated that:

*“Obviously, teachers are found to be less interested in the modern teaching and learning process and, even today, they adopt the traditional way of teaching. This makes it a bit difficult to implement my plans.”*

According to the findings, the majority of teachers argued that there is a significant relationship between the factors mentioned above when it comes to maintaining and enhancing the quality of education. Teachers' professionalism in terms of teaching, which they believed to include academic qualifications, pedagogical training and teaching experience, was found to have a positive relationship to students' performance. Additionally, they perceived that will power; teamwork, subject matter knowledge and teaching methods have a positive impact on encouraging students' academic activities.

#### **5.6.6 Characteristics of teachers**

The majority of the respondents in this study suggested that personality, the behaviour of teachers, personal teaching skills, subject matter knowledge and teachers' attitudes towards students are the key factors for quality teaching.

*“Teachers should be studious, so that students can benefit in terms of gaining knowledge about the subject matter that they are taught. Similarly, teachers with good personal teaching skills have a positive impact on the students’ learning.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Ubrn/M45 & Int.1/Pub/Ubrn/M46

The findings suggested that teachers should exhibit the same behaviour and attitudes to all students and that there should not be partiality among students as it may affect their learning. The respondents felt that if a teacher was commanding and had a good personality, along with a positive attitude, then teaching and learning activities would be effective. Two of the respondents supported the notion that the characteristics of teachers are important for effective teaching. If a teacher has a good personal attitude, teaching skills and style, combined with good subject knowledge, their teaching would be effective in promoting the quality of education.

*“The personal attitude and behavior of teachers towards students determines his/her image. His/her talent, skill, subject knowledge, teaching style and ability to control a class can contribute in a positive and progressive way.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Ubrn/F51 & Int. 16/Pvt/Rurl/M45

Hence, a teacher can be regarded as possessing a complex personality. The implication could be that the teachers’ perceive that when a student feels negatively about a teacher, it will affect the student, teacher and even the classroom environment. Thus, a teacher must be a role model: if a teacher inspires a student, then he/she will pay attention while learning. One of the respondents provided an example about an incident in school that resulted from a teacher’s behaviour towards a female student. They stated that:

*“Some time ago, one of the female students in the Chitwan district committed suicide due to insults from the teacher relating to her character and weaknesses in study.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Ubrn/F51

The majority of the respondents suggested that public school teachers and their attitudes resulted in poor quality teaching, which is seriously damaging to the futures of students. One of the respondents said that:

*“Most of the teachers are permanent and traditional in public schools. They do not prefer to adopt new techniques and technologies. This has hindered the quality of education. The major reason behind this is the lack of fear about being dismissed from their job.”*

-Int. 8/Pub/Ubrn/M53

Furthermore, some of the respondents shared that they had identified the reasons for poor performance and that they had started to improve the quality of teaching in their schools. They also requested that government officials should monitor them.

*“Teachers are permanent in public schools, but sufficient power is not given to head teachers, which means it is difficult to punish teachers. However, we decided to enter the classroom while teachers were teaching in order to make observations and suggestions so that they could improve. This was quite difficult in the case of permanent teachers.”*

-Int. 11/Pub/Rurl/M62

*“Permanent teachers adopt their own methods and then government officials do not monitor them. If the training is properly implemented with effective monitoring and resources can be managed, then quality can certainly be improved in public schools.”*

-Int. 12/Pvt/Rurl/M67

On top of that, some of the respondents identified some features that they were suggesting could improve teaching and learning activities. The respondents were proposing that teachers should be positive with students in order to run classroom activities successfully. Outside school too, she/he must be aware about her/his boundaries. Similarly, the respondents also suggested that teachers should be disciplined, self-motivated and energetic in order to address the desires of students.

#### **5.7 Theme 4- Government plans, policies and challenges**

In order to identify the teachers' perceptions regarding the relationship between the quality of teaching and students' academic performance, this study attempted to explore government

policies and plans. It also sought to identify the challenging factors involved in the implementation of policy. In this respect, this study gathered teachers' views about schools' planning, priorities, problems, monitoring system, supervision and evaluation system, curriculum, leadership exams and result system. Many of the respondents stated their desire for head teachers to be given more power and authority. Almost all of the respondents gave their thoughts about this theme and its sub-themes.

Table 1. 56: *Details of Theme 4 and sub-themes of the in-depth interviews*

<b>Theme 4: Government plans, policies and challenges</b>			
<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>References</b>
1.	Government policy and implementation	15	40
2.	Schools' plans, priorities and problems	13	27
3.	Exam and results system	12	23
4.	Monitoring/evaluation and reward/punishment	13	26
5.	Curriculum	9	12
6.	Leadership and authority (i.e., power)	9	28
7.	Government policy in private vs. public schools	11	22

### 5.7.1 Government policy and implementation

This research found that the majority of the respondents agreed that the government's plans and policies could help to enhance the quality of education. However, they also argued that they felt that there was a huge gap between policy and its implementation in actual practice.

The respondents were of the belief that there is lack of commitment to implementing policy and they suggested that the government should be conscious about the availability of adequate resources and infrastructures before preparing their plans and policies, as this could be helpful for the easier implementation of policies. Furthermore, they suggested that government officials should hold discussions with experts and related professionals when concentrating on resources, local problems and society.

*“There are some positive aspects of the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP). It cannot be applied completely, although it has contributed to the quality of education. We have some good government plans, such as for information and communications technology (ICT) in the school education system. Recently, the School Sector Development Plan*

*(SSDP) has been introduced, which can improve the status of public schools if properly implemented.*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

He further added that education policies, rules and regulations were being changed to improve education quality and that schools had to move ahead according to these changes. The problems in school systems needed to be identified in order to implement these changes.

*“I am totally positive about these approaches. The effort of the government is to upgrade the education system and to make Nepalese students competitive among international students. But we must understand the circumstances and constraints of our society. Before adopting a new system, one must make a detailed study of the system and acknowledge the positive and negative sides.”*

-Int. 10/Pub/Urbn/M58

One of the respondents argued that there is a need for moral education. On top of that, he felt that the teaching profession should be prioritised over other professions in the country, as teaching is listed in the least prioritised category of work in Nepal. He also suggested that if private school teachers were offered an alternative job, then he/she would be happy to accept it—either in the education sector or any other sector.

*“According to our existing system of education, at primary level, we have to target ‘what to teach’ in order to address the psychology of students. Similarly, at lower secondary level, the target should be ‘how to learn’, because, at this level, students are more curious and it would be easier to guide them through this approach. At secondary level, the target should be ‘why to learn’, in order to make the teaching and learning activities more effective and to address the [students’] needs. All these things should be taken into consideration for improving the performance of the students.”*

-Int. 3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

One of the respondents who worked in a rural area also revealed that there were challenging aspects when it came to implementing government policy in school education.



*“The implementation part is always challenging due to the lack of infrastructures and time limits. People who are at the policy level do not consider the practical difficulties of implementation, although there are some good aspects of the policies whose aims [are] to promote the quality of education.”*

-Int. 11/Pub/Rurl/M62

The collective voice of the respondents stated that, while making plans and policies, the government must address the problem of school resources, social circumstances and infrastructures. Hence, the teachers’ responses indicated their belief that it was crucial for the government to pay attention to the local needs of schools, as this would make a better standard of education possible.

### **5.7.2 Schools’ plans, priorities and problems**

The respondents informed the researcher that they were trying to implement their own plans, policies and priorities in order to increase the quality of education in their schools. However, they had realised that there were some challenging factors during the implementation stage. All of the respondents shared their views about planning and upcoming programmes (i.e., running classes in the English language), the improvement of science and computer labs, the extension of libraries and resources, transportation facilities for students and developing an effective supervision and monitoring system in order to enhance the quality of teaching.

*“During my time in charge, we have become strong in terms of infrastructures and technology. In the results, too, we are also ahead at district level. Our students are doing well at the international level. To be honest, we are gradually increasing the quality of education. All this was possible because of the new technology that emerged in education.”*

-Int.13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Furthermore, the respondents stated that they had focussed their efforts on some awareness programmes for parents as well as students. Similarly, some of the respondents shared that they had been conducting some motivation programmes and training for teachers in order to improve the quality of their school.

*“I am planning to continue both parents and students’ awareness programmes in the coming year. I will conduct educational activities according to the rules and regulations of the government. My preference would be to coordinate with the group of investors to develop the infrastructures and technologies that will support teaching and learning programmes. I am determined to obtain an 100% result in the SLC exam.”*

-Int. 12/Pvt/Rurl/M67

Most of the head teachers identified that schools’ main priorities are their future plans and addressing problems. However, they could not meet targets for improvement until their plans were implemented and their problems solved. But in most cases, these plans were not achieved due to weak rules, which created administrative obstacles.

*“It is difficult to implement my policies in an effective way because various factors hamper the implementation. For example, [although] we can make students learn for one hour, he/she won’t continue his/her habit of writing because of the lack of a supportive home environment. It is very hard to improve their performance because of different social factors. Students get disturbed when working in different environments. If this policy is implemented properly and students get a supportive environment for learning, only then can a quality education can be maintained.”*

-Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

One of the female respondents stated that her plan was to focus on students’ learning activities and the level of coordination with teachers. She intended to have regular consultations with guardians/parents to get rid of problems and to remove different obstacles.

*“I emphasise training the manpower and motivating them, caring for the students and having discussions with parents. I am promoting and encouraging the use of new technologies and a computer lab to support teaching and learning activities.”*

-Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

According to her philosophy, the all-round development of the child is important. She was of the opinion that the development of the child not only depends on the school environment; it also depends on the environment at home. Teachers are not only responsible for the

development of the child: parents are equally responsible. Hence, she believed that the all-round development of a child is possible through the combined efforts of teachers and parents.

### 5.7.3 Exam and results system

The performance of students is measured through the exam and results system. Society also assesses the performance of schools through the students' school results and their grades. The respondents had mixed views about the most recent changes to the results system (i.e., the letter grading system) and its impact. However, policymakers argue that this change was made in order to create uniformity with the global standard. One of the participants mentioned that:

*“There was no discussion at our level and the government did not care about this. Information on the letter grading system was also not provided. We just came to know about it from radio, television and different media. We also have not received any formal letters regarding the letter grading results system. Students do not devote attention towards their studies, thinking that they won't fail the exam. This can decrease our education quality. But there are positive aspects of the letter grading system, too.”*

-Int.16/Pvt/Rurl/M45

One of the respondents shared his opinion about the benefits of the letter grading system. He was not happy with the preparations before the policy was implemented. He also suggested to the government that it was essential to offer technical and vocational education for those who got lower grades.

*“The government is trying to imitate the international system and we have some good objectives in the letter grading system. For example, grades are provided according to the educational status of students in this system in school at grade 10, which is termed the secondary education examination (SEE). Low-grade students are provided with the option to get involved in any field they wish. In this system, no student will be stopped from getting a higher or vocational education due to their exam results and it will address the problem of unemployment. But no proper plans have been made to offer technical and vocational education [...] It is the responsibility of the government to provide employment services and to stop those who get lower grades in their exam results from going to foreign countries.”*

One of the respondents discussed the system of providing a chance of resitting an exam to those who had failed one or two subjects. This was in the old exam system at level. This system provided students with the opportunity to get through the SLC on their second sitting. The respondent also agreed with the letter grading system and felt that the letter grading system was a good one. When this system worked, he said, a student would never have the feeling of being unsuccessful.

The findings of the in-depth interviews seemed to suggest that the teachers' perceptions was that schools were not informed in a timely way about the implementation of new policies. The government exam and results policy were thought to be effective for enhancing education quality; however, there was a lack of information and communication with the heads of the schools. The respondents suggested that policymakers should communicate with head teachers or the school management before making policies and that they should inform them earlier in order to ensure their effective implementation.

#### **5.7.4 Performance management**

In terms of teachers' perceptions, it was found that there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation from the Government of Nepal in the education sector. Most of the respondents expressed their belief that there must be strong monitoring and evaluation at authority level, especially in public schools. Which to bring about improvements in school education should consider a monitoring and evaluation system as being an important parameter. The respondents felt that the giving of rewards to the best performing teacher should be encouraged, as well as providing chances for weaker teachers to improve.

Some of the respondents stated that they were monitoring teachers and giving them feedback, but that it would be more effective if there could be regular monitoring from the government. For example, two of the respondents explained that:

*“There must be proper evaluation for reward and punishment, which can encourage good teachers and can work as a positive pressure for others. Inconsiderate teachers must be punished in order to ensure the improvement of education quality. This problem is more often found in public schools rather than private ones.”*

-Int.16/Pvt/Rurl/M45

*“The Education Office provides training for teachers, but it does not do anything about implementation inside classrooms. There is a lack of supervision and monitoring from the district education office as well.”*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41

The respondents' opinions on this issue made clear their belief that implementing a reward and training system would lead to an improvement in the quality of teachers. However, there is still a lack of an appraisal system, which could further accelerate teachers' efforts to increase the quality of teaching. Some of the respondents from private schools claimed that they were conscious about the quality of education. They informed the researcher that they were giving enough time to observation and the monitoring of teachers, along with providing encouragement and fulfilling teachers' demands.

*“We are monitoring the teachers, providing refreshment training in order to motivate them, evaluating them at school level and giving awards to the best teacher on a yearly basis.”*

-Int. 5/Pub/Rurl/F52

*“We have many teachers who are rewarded at a national level, district level and community level. This has become a lesson for other teachers who are also in the school. We are evaluating the teachers internally. Annually, one teacher is given an award for his/her better [i.e., improved] performance. As far as punishment is concerned, we first give teachers a chance to improve and do not hesitate to fire them from the school if they cannot improve accordingly.”*

-Int.13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

It was mooted that a reward system (i.e., giving prizes, cash, certificates and awards, etc.) motivates teachers to give their best. The respondents seemed to suggest that this would be a lesson to other teachers and that they would improve their performance in order to try to win the prize next time. This would be a fruitful way of improving students' academic performance.

One of the respondents from a public school shared his experience of the selection process for recruiting a head teacher. He believed that the recruitment system for finding a school head was good but, once selected, he felt that the head teachers should observe the performance of other teachers properly.

*“I was one of the candidates to compete, like others, for the position of school principal on the basis of seniority, although this is not a highly effective technique. I found that the selection of a principal was quite different according to the government rules and regulations. A team that consisted of the School Management Committee and representatives from the education office performed the evaluation. Selection was done as per my academic qualifications, experience and my five year school development plan.”*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

The findings of this section suggest that the monitoring and evaluation of teachers’ performance is one of the important factors when it comes to improving the quality of education. The responses gathered make clear the fact that teachers perceive that supervising teachers’ performance helps in improving teachers’ performance, as does providing necessary feedback to them. Through receiving such feedback, teachers could make improvements to their teaching, which will help to increase the quality of education.

### **5.7.5 Curriculum**

According to the respondents’ answers to this section of the interview, teachers had a compulsion to apply traditional (i.e., chalk and talk) methods of teaching instead of student-centred teaching as a result of the requirement to complete the given curriculum on time. However, some of the respondents informed the researcher that teachers should make an effort to find a solution for motivating students by adopting a student-centered method of teaching.

*“If necessary, the curriculum should be changed. We have to adopt a traditional way of teaching to complete our course on time because of the existing curriculum. This should be taken into consideration, which would help students to explore ideas on their own.”*

–Int.16/Pvt/Rurl/M45

*“My aim is to divide the students into small groups and make them involved in the learning process. Along with this, I am planning to engage them in sports activities so that they can participate in different activities.”*

-Int. 5/Pub/Rurl/F52

Some of the respondents, including all three females, suggested that the government should change the curriculum by including practical activities and learning. This would allow students to actively and equally participate in order to explore their ideas and views.

*“I think the government needs to improve the school level curriculum. However, we have different teaching approaches in our school. Some information is given to the students about upcoming lessons and the students are given an assignment to study the lesson at home. This is effective for the students because we come prepared and, the next day, we have a fruitful discussion. This can somehow consume less time and more student participation can be possible.”*

-Int. 9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

Furthermore, one of the participants from a public school revealed the fact that private and public schools use completely different textbooks. He informed the researcher of the fact that there was a lack of education policy to ensure uniformity in the implementation of the curriculum in both public and private schools. In the same vein, another respondent suggested that policymakers should design the curriculum and offer job-oriented courses, vocational training courses and more technical education. The findings call for changes to the curriculum as per time and need.

#### **5.7.6 Leadership and authority (i.e., power)**

While talking about leadership and authority, the respondents indicated that no rights have been given to the head teachers for enhancing the quality of education. To address this issue, they appeared to be suggesting that, there is a need for serious supervision at government level and more power needs to be given to the head teachers of public schools for maintaining school discipline. There is not any effective monitoring mechanism for the certification of teachers, although teachers need a license to teach in publicly funded schools. Some of the respondents argued that if there was a fear of being punished among teachers, only then did they work hard.

In the case of private schools, head teachers' perceptions indicated that all of the administrative operations that are part of the overall school strategy are carried out by the head of school, who is also responsible for enhancing the performance of teachers and students.

*“For a head teacher of a public school, there is no power or authority given to the head teacher to improve the working methods of teachers, or to apply the proper rules and regulations. A head teacher must have the right to reward and punish the teachers. If a head teacher is provided with responsibility for such rights and made powerful, then only he/she can implement policies easily.”*

-Int.10/Pub/Urbn/M58

Similarly, some of the respondents from public schools compared the authority of private school and public school principals. They said that the private school principals were strong enough and that they had sufficient power to hire and fire teaching staff on the basis of their activities. In public schools, they argued, it was not possible to reprimand weak teachers because they had permanent posts and head teachers had no authority to punish them.

This cannot be generalised in all cases, as there are some public schools with strong head teachers who have a high level of authority. They can make complaints about their staff and transfer or reprimand them as per the government rule. This depends upon the nature of the head teachers and their dedication to their work.

*“Public school principals cannot punish the permanent teachers. This allows for anarchy in the whole school. A huge number of public school teachers are not professional in their work.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

*“Leadership is all about leading others through cooperation, addressing problems by finding solutions and implementing different plans and policies. Responsibilities are given to us, but, if teachers, in terms of implementing policy, create obstacles, then we need rights to solve the problem. So, the government should make a mechanism to get things on track.”*

-Int.15/Pub/Urbn/M41



Respondents further suggested that it was not only the duty of the head teacher to work for maintaining quality education. Teachers, they felt, were also responsible for maintaining the quality of education; however, there were some teachers who were not faithful to the teaching profession.

#### **5.7.7 Government policy in public versus private schools**

The respondents stated that a discriminatory policy is applied to private and public schools by the government. They also claimed that the rules and regulations of private schools and public schools should be different in order to enhance the quality of education and stated that discriminatory behaviour must be stopped. 11 respondents (9 male and 2 female) made comments on this issue. A variety of opinions were explored through the in-depth interviews with respondents from both types of schools. Most of the head teachers from private schools expressed their dissatisfaction with government policy. One of them said that:

*“The government should end the discriminatory behaviour between public and private schools in terms of providing scholarships for the students of MBBS and Engineering. Private schools are kept away from government scholarships, which certainly affects the psychology of students who are fit in every aspect. We are so depressed by this decision.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

One of the public school head teachers argued that the scholarship scheme for public school students has been effective and that it is promoting both public schools and the quality of education:

*“The parents of private school students are being attracted towards public schools, which achieve better results in some exceptional cases. The government is also providing scholarships for higher education only to those who study in public schools, which is plus point to encourage us.”*

-Int. 8/Pub/Urbn/M53

Likewise, a head teacher from a private school argued that private schools shouldn't have taxes imposed on them as they are a service-orientated organisation:

*“It is not appropriate to categorise private schools under the Company Act only so that the government can charge income tax. It is thought that private schools are only profit-oriented. But we think that, along with being profit-oriented, we are careful about providing better services. Therefore, there should be a separate act for private schools.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

Some of the respondents were dissatisfied with the government’s decision-making policy, but they agreed about the changes made in order to enhance education quality. One of them stated that:

*“The government makes policies and gives us instructions to do this and that, but no discussions are had with the private sector during the period of planning. We have limited sources of income. We have to remain within that boundary and manage our resources [...] But we have to say that the education systems, pedagogy and technology included in government policies are better.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

As per the findings, the teachers’ perceptions were that the government must be attentive towards delivering appropriate training as well resources for private schools as well as public schools. Private schools are profit oriented because business people finance them. Moreover, the respondents also explained that the scholarship schemes provided to students in public schools have been effective, which, at the same time, has enhanced the quality of education.

This study explored teachers’ perceptions in relation to schools’ planning, priorities and problems, which were found to be weak due to poor infrastructures and resources. According to the respondents, there is not any effective mechanism for monitoring the performance of teachers. Head teachers of public schools have more responsibilities but less authority, which they seemed to tender results in poor quality teaching. The curriculum has to be revised and updated from time to time, which is something that the respondents in this study affirmed. However, they said that it was important that the government should not neglect the private sector.

## 5.8 Theme 5- Parental responsibilities and socio-economic factors

The perceptions of head teachers were gathered on socio-economic factors, which were discussed under this theme, and which included various sub-themes. This study explored the opinions of respondents as to whether or not there is connection between teaching quality and caste, language, religion and culture. Similarly, parent awareness and involvement in educational activities was studied through the comments made by head teachers during the in-depth interviews. The family environment and parents' roles and responsibilities were also examined in this study via the in-depth interviews with head teachers.

Table 1. 57: *Details of Theme 5 and sub-themes of the in-depth interviews*

<b>Theme 5: Parental responsibilities and socio-economic factors</b>			
<b>S. N.</b>	<b>Nodes</b>	<b>No. Of Interview Sources</b>	<b>No. Of References</b>
1.	Parents' awareness and involvement	14	33
2.	Parents' roles and responsibilities	15	27
3.	Caste, language, religion and culture	16	19
4.	Economic condition of parents	9	16
5.	Family environment	9	11

The respondents provided mixed responses to this theme. Most of the respondents reported that some non-teaching factors, i.e., social structure, poor economic condition, caste system, family background and lack of parent awareness were major factors that contributed to poor academic performance. In order to solve the problem, some of the respondents suggested that the government should organise different awareness programs. Furthermore, they also suggested that policymakers should make plans and policies when considering real problems and socio-economic conditions. Specifically, the respondents said that the poor financial background of parents had an impact on students' poor performance in class. The participants believed that this was because of the lack of time and attention that students could devote to their academic activities when they were engaged in domestic and agricultural activities. The respondents also thought that these students did not have a favourable learning environment at home and that their parents could not support them as a result of their poor financial and academic situation.

### 5.8.1 Caste, language, religion and culture

The participants were asked about the impact of caste, language, religion and culture on the quality of education. Most of them seemed to suggest that caste, language, religion and culture have no significant relationship with poor education quality. However, some of the respondents explored the reality of Nepalese social structures, thinking patterns and the discriminatory rules and behaviours that had been directed towards lower caste teachers or students in previous years by their colleagues and seniors. These, they said, were some of the factors that had an effect on the quality of education. The respondents also mentioned that, at present, the state had reformed all of the discriminatory rules related to religion, caste, culture and language. One respondent told the researcher that:

*“There is not so much of a difference between these factors, in my opinion. No discrimination was found between students and teachers regarding these reasons. Even the use of language has no negative effect on performance. All the religions are equal and they have their own importance. The state, too, has no discriminatory approaches towards any language, caste, religion or culture. Instead, the state has focused more on enabling marginalised and backward citizens (e.g., lower caste and economically poor citizens) to get an education.”*

–Int.14/Pub/Urbn/M42

One of the respondents from a private school informed the researcher that the education quality in city areas was satisfactory and that there was not any kind of effect of caste, culture and religion. However, discriminatory behaviour could be found in lower caste families on the basis of caste, religion, culture and language in remote areas.

*“When we talk about the Chitwan district, the quality in cities is satisfactory. In remote places, there is certainly some influence of such discrimination and pressure. The lower caste teachers are hated by the school authority: that makes the teachers inactive and feel demoralised, but, in our school, there is no such discrimination and pressure because of different castes, religions or cultures.”*

–Int.3/Pvt/Urbn/M53

One of the respondents shared her experiences of religion, its effects and the ways to avoid these types of complications. She said that:

*“Nowadays, I don’t find any influence of these factors in our school. If we can identify the problem, we can also find a solution. For instance, some students are of different religions. There are about 50 students who follow Christianity. At first, they used [to] feel humiliated when we talked about the Hindu religion and festivals mentioned in the textbook. This decreases the concentration of students and we teachers have decided to give equal emphasis to all religions. Now this conflict has been solved.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

The participant response could suggest that there is not any effect of culture, language, caste system or religion on teaching and learning activities. All of the respondents were of the opinion that there is not any kind of relationship between cultural factors and students’ education.

### **5.8.2 Parents’ awareness and involvement**

The study found that, according to the teachers’ perceptions, there was a lack of parental awareness and that parents had a lack of interest in helping their children in their daily academic activities. Most of the participants suggested that the government and local school authority should try to raise the level of awareness. One of them said that:

*“I found that the major reason for weak education quality in government schools is due to the lack of the required level of awareness, lack of concentration and lack of support for the educational activities of children. So, I have started to hold discussions with parents and to provide suggestions, and these tasks have been somewhat effective.”*

-Int. 15/Pub/Urbn/M41

In a similar manner, one of the respondents stated their belief that children should be allowed to use electronic devices and social media, but that parents should be aware of what they were actually doing while using electronic devices and social media.

*“Similarly, the duty of guardians is to develop an interest in modern technology among children. Children should be given access to social media but limited use [of it]. The proper use of social media can help with their studies.”*

-Int. 6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

One of the respondents indicated her view that one must provide students with a proper environment and she also shared her experience of the signs of improvement that she had seen in her school.

*“There are different parameters by which to evaluate the quality of education. When we review the past, we, at present, are very much happy that we have been able to change the perspective of society using our teaching and learning strategies. We have adopted effective teaching and learning techniques and created a good learning environment, which has had a positive impact on attracting the attention of parents. Because of this, there has been an increase in the number of students.”*

-Int. 2/Pvt/Urbn/F51

The respondents also voiced their support for the involvement of parents. They believed that parents should be familiar with the students’ activities. Therefore, parents should be careful about keeping up to date with students’ progress.

*“We have been organising parent meetings from time to time, but we could only gather 10 to 15 parents for the purpose of discussion. I came to conclude that parents hardly care about the status of their children in or out of school [...] so I am willing to visit parents and to encourage them to participate in parent meetings.”*

-Int.8/Pub/Urbn/M5

Most of the respondents claimed that there is very little concern from the parents about their children’s learning activities, which they found out about in parental meetings. Moreover, the findings also suggested that it was the teachers’ perceptions that social media could help children to increase their performance. However, the respondents believed that parents have to monitor their children’s activities and that students need support from parents while at home.

### 5.8.3 Economic condition of parents

According to the respondents' comments, a major reason for the quality of education being weak, especially in public schools, is the socio-economic condition of parents. Out of 16 participants, 9 respondents (8 male and 1 female) from both types of schools (3 private and 6 public) commented on the fact that most of the students admitted to public schools were from poor economic backgrounds. The next difficulty was the status of the parents/guardians, which they felt had a direct influence on maintaining the quality of education. The findings suggest that it was the teachers' perceptions that the economic condition of parents has an impact on students' performance.

*"There are other factors too. For instance, parents with better economic conditions send their children to private schools. On the other hand, parents with a weak economic condition, whose children have weak academic performance, come to public schools. Because of this, we cannot improve the quality of education. Despite these problems, we are regularly in discussion with teachers and parents and we evaluate the weaknesses of students and their work [in order] to improve their performance."*

-Int.8/Pub/Urbn/M53

Some of the respondents stated their belief in the fact that the students' home environment was frequently not favorable to the students. They seemed to suggest that as a result of their poor financial situation, parents might not fulfil their children's desire to complete their education. In addition, some teachers believed that such an environment might lead to conflict between parents that would create an unfavourable environment for learning at home. One of them responded that:

*"There are some areas that are not possible for us to improve, from our side. For example, the economic condition of the family, home environment, etc., this can also hamper the quality of education."*

-Int. 16/Pvt/Rurl/M45

The findings suggested that not all of these factors are in the hands of teachers. The respondents believed that teachers alone could not improve the school environment, whereas parents were responsible for the home environment. Additionally, they also that believed that the home

environment of students largely depends upon the economic status of the family. Teachers further supposed that a family with a good economic condition would also provide a good environment for their children, and vice-versa.

#### **5.8.4 Family environment of students**

In order to identify the cause of the poor performance of students, respondents were asked their perceptions about the family environment. Out of 16 participants, 9 (8 male and one female) made comments on this topic. The majority of respondents believed that, due to poor economic conditions, there was not a good environment for students at home. They also felt that parents could not support their children, as most of them were illiterate. Similarly, the respondents argued that the parents did not have enough time for their children as they had to spend most of their time completing household activities. One stated that:

*“The main challenges for us are the management of the home environment and the environment outside the school. Other than that, due to the family background and environment, it is difficult for us to make improvements. The majority of students have migrated from other places and live in their relative’s houses with family members who also have poor academic performance.”*

-Int.5/Pub/Rurl/F52

Some of the respondents believed that the home is the first school of a child, but that parents did not pay attention to the studies of their children. Furthermore, some seemed to suggest that parents should provide a favourable and supportive learning environment at home. One respondent said that:

*“Such parents hardly give a thought to their children’s educational activities. For this reason, students are not getting proper guidance. Students remain at school for only 6 hours and the remaining 18 hours are spent at their home with their parents. Some students have to study after completing their assigned household activities. When students remain busy with household tasks, this obviously hampers their study.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62



One of the respondents shared an example about a problem that had contributed to a student's poor performance due to the unfavourable situation at home:

*“The home environment is most important for students. For example, one of my talented students slowly and gradually started to perform poorly in examinations. I called him and I did counselling with him. That way I was able to identify the problem. The problem was due to the lack of a favourable learning environment at home. I consulted with his parents and he started improving again.”*

-Int.6/Pvt/Urbn/M45

Some of the head teachers shared their view that some children are involved in household activities instead of focusing on their studies. In some cases, each member of the family needs to work because of the poor economic situation of the family. The next problem as the teachers' perceived it was that some of the students' parents had gone abroad for foreign employment. Similarly, the cause of poor performance among children, the respondents believed, resulted from the fact that parents had not given their full attention to their children's learning activities. In order to solve this problem, the respondents thought that parents should be responsible for creating a favorable learning environment for their children.

#### **5.8.5 Parents' responsibility for students' activities**

The study suggested that head teachers believed that parents play an important role and that they have a responsibility to improve students' academic performance. The majority of the respondents seemed to agree that parents should have certain responsibilities in terms of providing a good educational environment at home and that they should provide proper care and support. One respondent shared their thoughts by saying that:

*“Parents should also monitor the activities of their children and provide a better reading and writing environment at home. They should encourage their children towards their studies. For this, parents also need to be attentive and keep their children disciplined [...] I am always suggesting that the parents should be careful about the 3F's (food, fuel and friends). Parents should provide sufficient amounts of healthy food on time and look after their children's health. [They should also] provide lamps, in case of power-cuts, for reading and writing at night.”*

The teachers perceived that parents these days are worried about their children as they feel that their children do not obey them and are out of their control. The head teachers were of the view that most of the parents thought that it was the responsibility of teachers to look after their children's education. It was also suggested that if teachers worked hard and the parents/guardians were conscientious, then leadership would be strong.

*"Parents should be free from the notion that every responsibility will be fulfilled from the school's side only. They should also be responsible for their children."*

*"The major thing is the lack of inspection from parents. Some of the parents come to school and ask about the condition of their children and take suggestions from us."*

*"If the majority of the guardians and conscientious people in society bring their children to public school, then other people will feel positively about putting their children in public schools. We can support and care for their children, so that public schools will be seen as being more trustworthy and academically rich. The government is also equally responsible for improving the status of publicly funded schools."*

One of the respondents stated that when parents fulfilled all the desires and demands of their children, the children thought they would get whatever they wished. When children didn't get the things they demanded, they became frustrated and changed their behaviour. The teachers believed that school is a place where children learn and that parents are responsible for creating a positive learning environment at home. One of them stated that:

*"Guardians should understand the feelings of children and be able to point out right and wrong. Most importantly, guardians should provide their children with the things they need and offer proper support and guidance in order to understand their psychology and to help them in their studies."*

The respondents were of the opinion that although it is difficult for parents to know the psychology of children, it is essential for them to know the needs of, and to guide, their children. The majority of the respondents felt that the problem occurred outside school rather than inside and they felt that parents must take some responsibility for their children. Furthermore, the respondents stated that parents have a great responsibility towards their children and that they have to understand the feelings of their children and guide them to know what is right and what is wrong.

#### **5.8.6 Teachers' roles and responsibilities**

The comments made by the head teachers suggested that teachers should be more responsible in terms of their duties and role in providing teaching and learning activities in order to improve the quality of teaching. Blaming the government is not a solution by which to assure the quality of education; therefore, they said, teachers need to realise what their roles and responsibilities are. They also suggested that teachers cannot blame the system; instead, they themselves can have an impact on performance by improving the teaching and learning environment. One of the head teachers said that:

*“Teachers are responsible, and we are so careful about the investment of the parents in their children. We are determined in our duties and are able to make parents happy by providing a better infrastructure. Similarly, computer labs and sport materials also help to make a positive impact on the students and help to enhance education quality.”*

-Int. 13/Pvt/Rurl/M41

The respondents seemed to suggest that handling the students and enhancing their performance level is the responsibility of teachers, as the future of students is in the hands of teachers. Teachers have to consider children's behaviour and their psychology while educating them. Some of the respondents supported the notion that the education environment could be improved if the teacher is dutiful, the student concentrates on their studies and if there is effective monitoring from parents. Most of the teachers indicated that, along with the teachers' teaching quality and classroom environment, both teachers and students were responsible for enhancing students' performance in the classroom. One of them stated that:

*“A teacher should be responsible towards the school, students and guardians. Teachers also should have a good knowledge of the subject matter and remain up-to-date with technology and teaching methods.”*

-Int.9/Pvt/Rurl/F49

This respondent further argued that this could be achieved through pedagogical training and refreshment programmes for continuous professional development (CPD). Her perception was that a teacher could be updated through training that equips them with new knowledge and teaching and learning techniques, which would enable the teacher to improve students' academic performance. A teacher who did not update their skills could see a decrease in their performance, another respondent argued. He argued that:

*“If a teacher becomes idle, they don't want to make any lesson plans and don't concentrate on homework and feedback—and the quality of teaching ultimately diminishes.”*

-Int.11/Pub/Rurl/M62

This respondent suggested that in order to keep a teacher active, s/he should be given activities related to students' learning pedagogy and that the head teacher could create an environment conducive to improvement.

One of the respondents shared their belief that no teacher wanted his/her students to neglect their studies. However, teachers must have good learning habits and should provide students with a friendly learning environment. They felt that these factors could help students to generate their own ideas. In contrast, another respondent suggested that there are some teachers who do not take responsibility for students' activities. According to her, in the case of leisure time, teachers were not serious about instructing their students. She also believed that students being engaged in the learning activities are beneficial.

## **5.9 Summary**

This chapter has examined teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools and there appears to be some positive relationships between the variables. There were various factors that the teachers' perceived as having an

impact on the quality of education. Teachers perceived that the school environment (i.e., internal and external) and facilities were major factors that contributed to improving the quality of education. The findings from the in-depth interviews also revealed teachers' belief that teaching and learning methods and resource management are also key factors that affect the quality of education. Similarly, it could be mooted that the findings were suggesting that government policies and plans are effective in the eyes of head teachers, although there are some challenging factors when it comes to implementing these in practice. Furthermore, the respondents felt that poor information and communication, poor infrastructures, the lack of resources, interruptions to teaching and learning activities in school, less support from parents and other socio-economic factors played a role in reducing the quality of education. However, the study did not find that the teachers perceived that there was any influence of culture on the quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic performance.

## CHAPTER VI

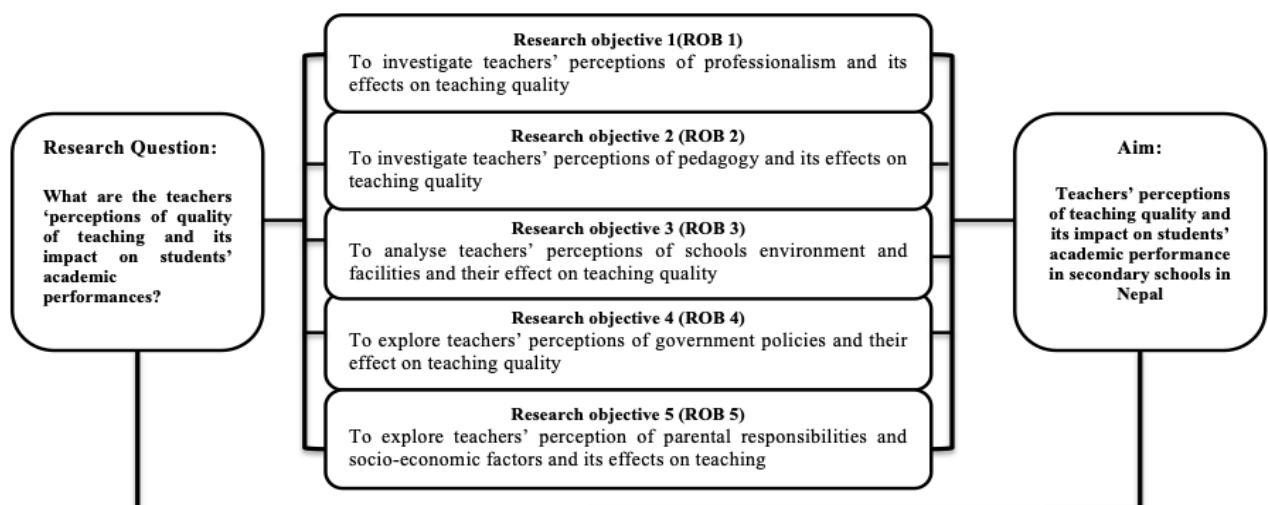
### DATA INTEGRATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

This research investigates teachers' perceptions about teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal. In order to address the main aim and objectives of this study, data was collected and analysed by applying a mixed method approach. Quantitative data was collected from both teachers and head teachers from 55 secondary schools in Nepal who answered the survey questionnaires. The quantitative data was analysed in SPSS using a statistical tool: the Mann-Whitney U Test. In-depth interviews were conducted among 16 head teachers (i.e., principals) as a source of qualitative data, which was followed by thematic analysis (see Chapter 3).

The focus of this study is primarily on identifying the factors that affect teaching quality in secondary schools in Nepal. The main research question of the study is: "What are teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' academic performance?" Among the different types of mixed method approach, convergence parallel design was chosen to analyse and interpret the findings of this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and analysed separately in line with convergence parallel design. In relation to the integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings of this study, interpretation and reporting was used for data integration, whereas the narrative technique—through the weaving approach—was adopted as a convergence parallel method (see Chapter 3).

Figure 1.8: *Research aim and objectives*



As shown in the figure (1.8), ROB1, ROB2 and ROB4 are achieved through both the quantitative and qualitative findings, whereas ROB3 and ROB5 are achieved through the qualitative findings of this study.

## **6.2 Teachers' perceptions of professionalism**

Research Objective 1 (ROB1) was investigated by using the results from the quantitative (see Chapter 4) and qualitative (see Chapter 5) findings. The quantitative findings (see Chapter 4) support ROB1; namely, that teachers' professionalism positively affects students' academic performance. The results show that teachers believe that teachers' professionalism, which is argued in this study as including academic qualifications, training, experience, attitude, personality and skills, has a significant influence on teaching quality, thus leading to better academic performance. The findings suggest that there is a strong relationship between teachers' academic qualifications and the quality of teaching when it comes to improving students' achievement. This is because teachers with a higher level of qualification have an extensive range of knowledge regarding the subject matter, which can make teaching and learning activities more effective and efficient. Although the findings strongly support, in most cases, the fact that teachers with a higher level of academic qualification can make positive changes, it does not support this in the case of trainee teachers.

Likewise, there is a strong relationship between pedagogical training and experience, and also teachers' attitude and personality, in terms of their impact on the quality of teaching of both public and private school teachers. Experience was of greater importance for teachers working in rural schools in comparison with urban teachers from public and private schools. However, private school teachers had a significantly stronger level of agreement than public school teachers on the fact that the teacher-student relationship is very important for quality and performance. Moreover, the findings also showed a statistically significant different strength of agreement between teachers who had completed a bachelor's degree compared to those who had completed a master's degree or above level of qualification. That is, the master's degree group strongly supported the notion that there is a correlation between teachers' teaching skills and their strategy and knowledge on the subject matter. They believed that strategic planning and knowledge could help to create effective teaching and thus encourage pupils to learn more in the classroom.

In addition, the qualitative findings (see Chapter 5) also support ROB1; namely, that teachers' professionalism positively affects students' academic performance. The higher the academic degree a teacher has, the more positive an effect it will have on the quality of teaching, because the teacher will have an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter. Similarly, most of the teachers from public schools received more frequent pedagogical training compared to teachers in private schools. However, the teachers' perceptions support the notion that private schools achieve better performance because of their strong management and teacher motivation, whereas public school teachers fail to implement ideas and strategies learned from training and seminars in their classroom activities. The respondents also believed that the professional development of teachers (i.e., training and refreshment programmes) is essential for improving teaching and that this knowledge needs to be shared with other teachers in schools and applied to the classroom.

The qualitative findings also indicated that experienced teachers can deliver effective teaching. However, the findings also showed that teachers' effectiveness depends on how a teacher updates him or herself with new knowledge and uses resources, including technology, in everyday teaching. The findings revealed that a set pattern of teaching could not fulfil the contemporary demand for teaching and learning activities. In addition, the qualitative findings indicated that teachers' honesty, faithfulness to their profession, hard work and commitment are the basic features of a professional teacher and that these could enhance students' academic performance. The results from both public and private schools showed the importance of teachers' commitment to the quality of education. However, the results suggested that public school teachers are less committed. The findings from the qualitative study also supported the fact that teachers' personalities and teaching skills add to the quality of teaching.

The extant literature by Geo and Stickler (2008), Darling-Hammond (2000), Budding and Zamarro (2009), Clotfelter et al. (2006), Rice (2003), Betts et al. (2003), Rahman et al. (2011) and Ouibe and Van (2015) shares similar arguments about academic qualifications that are in alignment with the findings of this study; namely, that teachers' qualifications make a positive difference to students' academic achievement. However, Kimani et al. (2013), Huang and Moon (2009), Zuzovsky (2003) and Lydia et al. (2015) do not agree that teachers' academic qualifications enhance students' academic performance, as is suggested in this study's findings in the case of trainee teachers. The current literature varies in terms of its findings in relation to the issue of academic qualifications and their influence on teaching quality. However, the



majority of the extant studies emphasise the fact that teachers' level of academic qualification enhances students' academic performance, which is similar to the result of this particular research study.

Another result is also in alignment with the extant literature by Bergh and Wahlstrom (2018), Anderson Pence (2015), Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (2007), Thomas (2013), Avalos (2011) and Cristina-Corina and Valerica (2012). This is the finding that teachers believe that teachers' individual traits, such as personality, cognitive skills and attitude towards work, can develop into their professionalism, thereby leading to better academic achievement.

Driel and Berry (2012), Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) and Evans (2014) argued that trained teachers consistently produce stronger student achievement than untrained ones. In addition, Ololube (2006) found that effective teaching is one of the major factors of students' academic performance and that this is only possible by providing proper training, in terms of educational planning and professional development, in teachers' training and refreshment programmes (Agharuwhe, 2013). In the same way, Webster-Wright (2017), Tahir et al. (2014), Donche and Van Petegem (2011) and Avalos (2011) revealed that continuous professional development (CPD) programmes aimed at developing effective teaching boost not only the quality of teachers but also the achievements of students. Similarly, Hegde and Cassidy (2009) and Haris (2008) found that training for teachers enhances their in-depth understanding and allows them to gain ideas and confidence that untimely enable them to provide a better quality of education. Rahman et al. (2011), Pradhan (2011) and Kosgei et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between teachers' training and students' performance. They argued that training for teachers makes them professional, which is a crucial factor for enhancing students' achievement. Hence, the findings are in alignment with the literature in confirming that teachers' professional development makes a positive difference to students' academic achievement. On the other hand, Yates, Park and Sung (2013) and Yee and Chen (2009) argued that teachers' internal input and external output can contribute to the quality of teaching. This is supported by the findings; namely, that knowledge of content and the use of teaching techniques have a greater positive effect on students' achievement.

The findings support the fact that teachers' experience and its interaction effects are some of the parameters by which to improve students' academic performance. It is obvious that teachers with teaching experience perform better as teachers, because such teachers will have learned

about additional techniques and gained more knowledge about how to make classes more effective (Dagnew & Asrat, 2016). Also, the teachers who were qualified were found to be competent in delivering appropriate learning. Proper interaction helps teachers to understand the requirements of students and also helps them to deliver appropriate guidance to underprivileged students that will, in return, help the weaker students to attain good scores. This is in alignment with the extant literature of Geo and Stickler (2008), Darling-Hammond (2000), San Diego (2013), Clotfelter et al. (2006), Ololub (2006), Harris (2008), Anderson et al. (1994), Kosgei et al. (2013) and Huang and Moon (2009), which found that teachers' experience is consistently associated with students' achievement.

Conversely, a few previous studies; namely, Kimani et al. (2013), Harbison and Hanushek (1992) and Zuzovsky (2003), claimed that there is no positive relationship between teachers' experience and students' academic performance. These studies found that the teacher qualifications, gender, age and experience do not contribute to students' performance; however, the workload of a teacher can be a key factor for academic achievement. Hence, there is no consistent perception about teaching experience in connection with students' performance. However, both the qualitative and quantitative study in this research project found a positive relationship and the majority of the previous literature supported this finding.

Both the quantitative and qualitative study found that teachers' characteristics in terms of professionalism, which includes personality, faithfulness, hard work and commitment, could improve teaching and learning activities. The studies of Rockstroh (2013), Ehrenber and Brewer (1994), Darling-Hammond (2002), Cavalluzzo (2004), Marcoulides et al. (2005), Akareem and Hossain (2016), UNESCO (2008) and Bista (2004) also found that teachers should have a positive attitude, good learning habits and work hard to motivate students to learn more. The findings also support that there is a positive relationship between better-prepared teachers, their teaching style and skills and students' academic performance. The studies conducted by Dunn et al. (2018), Maria and Jeri (2013), Campbell et al. (1997), Desimone (2018) and UNESCO (2008) mentioned that teaching and learning are effective if teachers have knowledge of content, personal skills in teaching and are self-motivated and committed to providing the best quality of teaching.

Moreover, evidence gathered from the qualitative and quantitative study in this particular research project supported the notion that perceptions of teachers' professionalism (i.e.,

teachers' teaching skills and strategies, subject matter knowledge, personality and attitude) are directly associated with students' academic performance. However, the current study found that a teacher could be regarded as having a mixture of personalities. A teacher should be a role model in order to motivate students and students should respect and work with the teachers in a positive manner, which has mutual benefits that enhance the quality of education. Overall, both the qualitative and quantitative study found a correlation between teachers' perceptions of teaching quality, which includes academic qualifications, pedagogical training, teaching experience, professionalism, subject matter knowledge, personal teaching skills, strategy, impact and students' academic performance.

### **New findings**

The findings on professionalism in this study support the existing literature (see Chapter 2). However, the qualitative study has some new and contrasting findings; namely, that training is ineffective in the context of Nepal and that there is a lack of willpower to increase the quality of education in public schools. The findings strongly suggest that the knowledge and experience gained from training are ineffective in practice and that teachers implement traditional teaching methods with no creativity and with little motivation to change.

### **6.3 Teachers' perceptions of teaching pedagogy**

ROB2 was investigated by using the results from the quantitative (see Chapter 4) and qualitative (see Chapter 5) study. The quantitative findings (see Chapter 4) support ROB2; namely, that teaching methods positively influence students' academic performance. The results show that teachers' knowledge of teaching pedagogy has a significant influence on teaching quality, thus leading to better academic performance. The researcher investigated teaching and learning methods, i.e., the learner-centred and teacher-centred teaching approach. Regarding these, the use of information and communications technology (ICT), class size, extra activities, English medium classes, homework and feedback and individual care and support for students have been found to be correlated with, and to support, effective teaching pedagogy.

The quantitative findings (see Chapter 4) suggest that there is a strong relationship between student-centred teaching methods and the quality of teaching. As per the findings, teaching quality is dependent on the student-centred learning approach. This is because students pay

more attention and are actively involved in learning activities when the teacher teaches with a good plan, knowledge and strategy and provides and uses essential resources and materials based on the needs of students. The findings support the use of learner-centred pedagogy in comparison to the teacher-centred teaching approach: the latter is less likely to encourage students to improve their performance because it is largely related to one-way communication. The findings from this study are in line with the existing literature; namely, Tavakoli and Baniasad-Azad (2017), Izumi (2001), Sanders and Rivers (1996), Figlio (1999), Adesote and Fatoki (2013), Liu et al. (2015), Jia et al. (2017) and Bakx et al. (2015), which supports the student-centred teaching approach.

Very few participants stated that teacher dominant teaching and learning activities are being practised in most of the secondary schools in Nepal. In order to investigate this issue further, a survey was conducted among teachers with 20 or more years of experience and those with less than 20 years of teaching experience, and different results were obtained from these two groups of teachers. It was found that most of the less experienced teachers showed a significantly stronger level of approval for the teacher-centred pedagogy. They argued that this was because of the curriculum and a shortage of teaching staff.

The qualitative findings (see Chapter 5) also strongly support the fact that teachers' perceptions of teaching methods are directly associated with students' academic performance. The majority of the respondents were in favour of the student-centred teaching method, compared to the teacher-centred method. They argued that the student-centred teaching method makes students feel encouraged because of their equal participation, active involvement in discussion and the use of technology, all of which are effective in improving their knowledge. The findings of the qualitative study regarding teachers' perceptions of the quality of teaching show that extra support classes are effective in improving the performance of weak students. Furthermore, teachers believed that there is a positive relationship between extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, dance, art and speech competitions, etc.) and students' academic performance. Teachers' perceptions of extracurricular activities were explored through the qualitative study and it was found that students feel energised by extra activities in school that allow them to show their talents. These achievements motivate them to stay disciplined and encourage them to concentrate on their studies.

Wenglinsky (2002) stated that student-centred learning is carried out by students and that teachers help them to explore their ideas and knowledge. On the other hand, Lee and Cross

Francis (2018) put forward the notion that student-centred learning is initiated by teachers permitting students to share their choices and to have confidence in their abilities to lead, as well as to think, about how it feels to acquire knowledge. The findings also support Jaaskela et al. (2017), who argued that a revised curriculum and the use of technology in self-learning can have a greater impact on encouraging students' participation and motivation.

Plessis (2019) and Hasting (2015) also supported the view that the impact of the interaction between students is only possible in student-centred pedagogy when students get the chance to be involved in learning by presenting their views on the issue, which helps to enhance students' academic performance. However, this study found that there is a lack of resources, equipment and infrastructures and that this affects the implementation of the student-centred approach of teaching. The findings also link to the literature, i.e., Liu et al. (2015), Lee and Cross Francis (2018), Schinefeld (2015), Jia et al. (2017), Bakx (2015), Bodalina (2015), CERID (2002) and Franke et al. (2015).

According to the results, public school teachers are more likely to believe that a good student-teacher relationship is an important factor for enhancing students' performance. Savage (2016), Vally and Daud (2015) and Paudel (2012) explain that homework and feedback in the teaching space encourage student participation. Interaction fuels students' enthusiasm and helps students to understand the significance of the teachers' topic. CERID (2002) and Chen and Mensah (2018) also found that a good, strong and friendly relationship between teachers and students creates a positive and supportive academic environment that leads to improvements in the quality of education. However, they further mentioned that this is most likely to occur in small classes. The findings of the qualitative study found that teachers felt that a good relationship between teachers and students could help to increase students' academic achievement.

The Nepalese government has implemented a policy for the use of information and communications technology in school education in order to ensure that the country can maintain a global level of education quality (DOE, 2013). It has been acknowledged that in order to provide an education to all students and to provide students with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, it is necessary to work actively for the development of the quality of education (Subedi, 2003). ICT is important as it improves classroom delivery, increases access to teaching and learning materials and improves the effectiveness and efficiency of education overall (Jia et al., 2017). Furthermore, Dahal and Dahal (2015), Azam

and Kingdon (2015) and Adesote and Fatoki (2013) indicate that ICT provides a great opportunity to improve teaching and learning activities, which helps to enhance students' academic performance.

Both the qualitative and quantitative findings support the fact that student-centred teaching pedagogy is a more effective method compared with the teacher-centred method. The respondents' feedback on the issue of teaching methods revealed that students receive individualised care and support from a teacher who is using the student-centred teaching method, which enhances their performance. Furthermore, teachers believe that students taught using this method get an equal opportunity to participate in creative work, explore their ideas and understanding and to communicate with each other to find the solution, which creates a great opportunity for them to improve their performance. However, the findings also make clear teachers' belief in the fact that in most cases it is very difficult to implement the student-centred teaching method in Nepalese schools due to a lack of teachers, class size, insufficient technology and the curriculum. Moreover, it was found that some teachers were not particularly interested in modern teaching methods and the use of new technologies to enhance the quality of teaching.

The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative study are in alignment with the literature in finding that teachers believe that student-centred pedagogy makes a positive difference to improving students' academic performance. The findings of the study suggest that the majority of the respondents prefer to apply modern teaching methods and to use ICT, and that this is easier if there is a small class size. Furthermore, a good teacher-student relationship, extra classes for weak students and extracurricular activities are encouraging factors that are found to be helpful in enhancing students' learning outcomes. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that teachers consider that teaching in the English language is effective and that students need individual care in order to improve their performance. The teachers were also of the opinion that homework and feedback also encourage students to enhance their performance.

#### **6.4 Teachers' perceptions of the school environment and facilities**

ROB3 was explored using the results from the quantitative and qualitative study (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Both sets of findings support ROB3; namely, that the school environment and facilities positively influence students' academic performance. The results show that the teachers were of the opinion that the school environment and facilities have an impact on the

quality of teaching. The results strongly support the fact that school discipline is an internal factor for quality teaching and that a teacher must possess professional skills, be attentive to the management of classroom activities and have skills in dealing with attitudes and issues, etc., in order to make students disciplined. This will help in attaining better performance. In addition, the majority of the respondents acknowledged that strong leadership remains extremely important for creating a disciplined environment in schools for both teachers and students. The study also found that teachers believe that the financial issues involved in running schools, the efficiency of the school management committee and the availability of teachers, textbooks and electricity were factors that affected the quality of school education in Nepal. These issues were considered to be challenging factors when it comes to improving students' academic performance. The findings also suggested that there is a strong relationship between schools' infrastructures and teaching and learning facilities. This was found to be another challenging factor when it comes to improving the quality of education.

ROB3 was explored using results from the qualitative study (see Chapter 5). The qualitative findings support ROB3; namely, that the school environment and facilities positively influence students' academic performance. The results show that teachers must possess professional skills and be attentive to the management of classroom activities. They must have skills for dealing with students' attitudes, issues and behaviour in order to make students disciplined, which will help them in attaining better performance. Sometimes, the teachers observed rudeness and misbehaviour in their students both inside the classroom and outside the school environment. Students exhibiting these kinds of behaviours and the students who disrupted classes were complained about to their parents in order to take necessary steps to improve their behaviour. Likewise, the results found that the majority of the respondents felt that a good school environment is a sign that a high-quality educational environment is being provided in secondary schools, which is an important factor for them when considering which schools to choose for their children. The findings supported the fact that discipline is one of the factors affecting poor performance and that teachers felt that they should be responsible for their duties, whereas students should focus on their studies in order for quality teaching to take place.

The results showed that there is a strong connection between improving infrastructures, so that there are enough resources and facilities, and increasing the quality of education. The findings found that when there is a better educational environment, then teachers are satisfied. However, the respondents also indicated their belief that the quality of education, as well as the

performance of the students, is hampered when both teachers and students have to work in learning environments that have a poor physical infrastructure. Likewise, the results suggest that poor infrastructures and resources are a challenging factor when it comes to improving the academic performance of students, because both can affect the psychology of students, according to the respondents. The results also found that an insufficient number of subject teachers in school, the delayed distribution of textbooks in public schools and the unavailability of electricity during school were some of the additional challenging factors when it comes to improving students' academic performance. The majority of the public school head teachers blamed the government for this, as they felt that it showed some unfairness when placing teachers in different schools.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' perceptions of the quality of education are notably associated with the financial situation of both private and public schools. The findings of the qualitative study found that the majority of the public schools were suffering from a weak financial situation and that teachers felt that this created complications when it came to teaching regular classes. Hence, the teachers' responses made clear their belief in the fact that a school's financial situation is an important factor that can have an impact on the teaching and learning activities carried out in school. The respondents indicated that it remains important to improve the physical infrastructures of schools and to provide facilities, such as a computer lab, technical equipment to run audio-visual classes, library management and sports equipment. However, they felt that there is a lack of money available to improve, expand and operate these facilities. This study found that the majority of the respondents were trying to manage alternative sources of income.

The findings of this study also revealed that public schools should charge low additional fees in order to offer extra classes and extracurricular activities and to maintain their infrastructure. However, stakeholders, parents and political parties have made clear their disagreement with public schools requesting the payment of additional fees. This is also linked to the studies of Cavrini et al. (2015), CERID (2002a) and Karki (2015). The findings indicate that the teachers support government policy, but that they feel that the government should also be active in providing essential resources and facilities.

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings show that teachers' perceptions of the school environment and facilities are intimately linked to the quality of teaching and learning activities when it comes to students' academic performance. In their responses, the respondents indicated



their belief that both the teaching and learning environment in school and the environment outside school contribute equally to the quality of education. They felt that the school management committee should be developed as an independent forum, which should be free from political interference, in order to improve quality of education. Similarly, the findings of this study suggest that maintaining the discipline of teachers and students is one of the challenging factors when it comes to enhancing students' academic performance.

The extant literature by Hartwig (2013), CERID (2002a), World Bank Report (1997), Aghauwhe (2013), Haverinen (2015), Obilo (2012), Glewwe (2004), Parajuli and Das (2013), MOE (2009), Thapa (2013) and Subedi (2004) has found a similar trend when it comes to a positive school environment and the quality of teaching. The findings of this study suggest that the majority of head teachers from both private and public schools view academic performance either as being the greatest challenge or the greatest achievement of the school. Head teachers also mentioned that improving academic performance was the main issue discussed at annual teacher-parent meetings in both private and public schools. The findings of this research, especially in the case of private schools, showed that good academic results have a positive impact on ensuring that a school has a better reputation, which could attract more, and better performing, students.

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents felt that there is a lack of library materials and other resources, such as technology, computer and science labs and other facilities. This study also found that insufficient numbers of subject teachers in schools, the delayed distribution of textbooks in public schools and the unavailability of electricity during school are some of the additional challenging factors when it comes to improving students' academic performance. In addition, some of the respondents blamed the government for showing some unfairness when placing teachers in different schools. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the respondents did not feel that that the government allocated teachers according to the needs of schools. It was crucial, the respondents argued, that the government should provide sufficient teachers for schools and that free textbooks should be provided to the students on time. Parajuli and Das (2013), Akomolafe and Adesua (2016), Obilo (2012), Leithwood et al. (2014) and Gee and Koomen (2017) support the findings of this study. They found that there is a strong positive relationship between a good school environment with good infrastructures and facilities and enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. However, poor school infrastructures, poor classroom availability, the unavailability of textbooks on time and

the lack of other teaching and learning resources are some of the unfavourable factors when it comes to improving students' academic performance in Nepal (Nepal & Maharjan, 2017).

The findings of this study show that teachers perceived the school environment and facilities to be significant factors that are clearly linked to the quality of teaching and learning activities. In this regard, the teaching and learning environment in schools, as well as the environment outside schools, contribute equally to the quality of education. Similarly, the interviews showed that maintaining the discipline of teachers and students is one of the challenging factors in enhancing students' performance. After evaluating the perceptions of teachers regarding the discipline issue, the researcher suggests that this problem should be further investigated in order to effectively improve education quality in developing countries like Nepal.

Teachers' perceptions regarding schools' infrastructures and resources were found to be an important factor for maintaining the quality of education. Timisena (2008) and Karki (2015) claimed that the government should be focused on providing an adequate number of subject teachers, distributing free textbooks on time, providing sufficient funds for public schools to manage resources and providing facilities, including a library, lab, technology and alternative sources of energy, in order that schools can be run properly. Thapa (2013) and Subedi (2004)'s findings also support this study. They argue that poor physical infrastructures, a shortage of teachers and resources and ineffective management are the factors that are most responsible for ineffective performance management, competency and organisational leadership. This results in poor performance in public schools as compared to schools that are managed privately. In this regard, Gautam Stephnie et al. (2015) and Nepal and Maharjan (2017) suggest that the Government of Nepal has accepted that poor school infrastructures and the lack of teaching and learning facilities have been a problem when it comes to improving the quality of education.

According to MOE (2009), improving school education is challenging in the context of Nepal. The management of daily school activities, teaching quality and course content are counted as some of the challenging factors. Similarly, the majority of schools experience a lack of resources, in terms of access to buildings, books and adequately qualified subject teachers. It can be said that these problems were challenging factors even before the 2015 earthquake. This is supported by the current study. The teachers' responses regarding the school environment and facilities, in relation to teaching and learning activities, indicate that they consider them to be a crucial factor that has an impact on students' academic performance.

## **6.5 Teachers' perceptions of government policies**

ROB4 was explored using the results from the quantitative (see Chapter 4) and qualitative (see Chapter 5) findings. The quantitative findings (see Chapter 4) support ROB4; namely, that government policy and its implementation significantly influence the quality of teaching. The results show a significant relationship between national educational policy and the quality of teaching in certain areas. These include developing and reforming the national curriculum, financing the education sector, teaching staff management, resource allocation, the formation of school management committees, the examination and results system, monitoring and the leadership and motivation of teaching staff. The findings indicate that the curriculum should be developed and reformed to provide a contemporary needs-based education and that it should be improved over time.

Likewise, proper infrastructures, resource allocation and financing allow students and teachers to be involved in effective teaching and learning activities and to utilise these factors in order to enhance the quality of teaching. The results strongly support the fact that supervision and evaluation enhance the quality of teaching. The respondents indicated their belief in the fact that this motivates trained teachers to perform better and allows untrained teachers to improve by revisiting their teaching techniques and strategies.

Similarly, the findings are strongly aligned with the argument that the good leadership qualities of a teacher bring about an improvement both in teaching quality and the performance of students. The results show that private school teachers significantly agree with this argument when compared to public school teachers. This indicates that teachers in private schools have better leadership qualities than those in public schools.

The findings suggest that teachers are of the opinion that government policies can improve the quality of teaching. However, the findings on the availability and implementation of such policies in the schools concerned do not support this argument. This is because the results highlight the fact that the teachers felt that there was poor policy implementation due to a lack of resources in the schools examined in this study. The findings show that teachers felt that there is a gap in policy implementation as a result of the shortage of resources and because of top-down policies: the teachers stated that local schools have very little say in terms of planning to improve the quality of teaching.

The findings show that the respondents felt that the monitoring and evaluation of teachers is important for improving the quality of education. The teachers' responses, as stated via their completion of the open-ended question, indicated that they believed that the monitoring of teaching and learning activities and giving feedback to teachers was effective in enhancing the quality of education. In addition, they stated that monitoring and giving feedback to teachers could provide good opportunities for teachers to improve, implement and correct their pedagogical techniques. The findings of this study also suggested that a monitoring system should be implemented in both private and public schools for quality control through the use of a reward and punishment process. The teachers questioned suggested that teachers who are found to be performing well could be rewarded in order to motivate them, such as by being offered salary increases, bonuses and incentives. They felt that these are some of the rewards that could be given in order to motivate teachers to perform even better. Penalties, they suggested, could include the threat of firing, salary cuts or a reduction of the teachers' role.

The results for private schools show that all of the schools' plans could not be implemented because of the schools' poor financial situation, profit-oriented investors and the structure of society. However, it was found that there is a positive relationship between investors and teacher and parent meetings when it comes to improving the quality of teaching.

The findings in relation to the exam and results system suggest that teachers feel that the new system has had a positive impact on students' performance. This is because students can progress to a higher level through the grading system. There is little chance of failure for students, which the respondents felt was something that encourages them to study. However, the findings suggest that teachers were not informed about this system in time and did not get time to prepare their teaching plans accordingly. It is also possible that students do not work hard to secure good marks because of the new grading system.

The findings from the qualitative study suggest that there is a gap between government policy and its implementation. Government plans and policies have made an important contribution to enhancing the performance of students; however, such policies should focus on solving the problem of poor infrastructures, inadequate time frames for applying new rules and regulations and the problem of resources and social circumstances. Hence, the respondents felt that policymakers should be focused on overcoming practical difficulties in order to promote a better education quality.

The findings are aligned with current literature on government policy and its implementation. There are various points of view on government policies and their relationship with teaching quality. The notable writers who support this argument are Nepal and Maharjan (2017), Gautam and Alford (2014), Sarkar (2008), Scheerens (2005), Olobube (2006), Karki (2015), UNESCO (2004), UNESCO (2008) and Summers (2017). Their findings link policy and curriculum reform to creating effective learning by addressing theoretical, practical and needs-based education. However, the context of their research varies to that of the study at hand, which is based in Nepal. Moreover, the findings also suggest that the curriculum, teaching and learning resources and facilities that have played an important role in maintaining the quality of education are school-based professionalism, flexibility and relevance to students' academic performance, as argued in the literature review (Warwick et al., 1992). However, the practice of having a centralised curriculum in diverse populations is another key contributing factor that teachers perceived as contributing to poor performance in public schools in Nepal.

The findings also reinforce the study by Darling-Hammond (2000), which found that investment in policy making has a positive influence on strengthening the quality of education. In addition, the findings are in alignment with Gautam and Alford (2014) and Karki (2015), who specified that governments must expend effort in formulating and updating policy and who also affirmed the importance of curriculum-based pedagogical training. The findings also suggest that shortages of subject teachers, the application of traditional teaching methods and a lack of resources and classroom facilities need to be addressed by a good policy mechanism. This is in alignment with the studies by Parajuli and Das (2013) and Akareem and Hossain (2016). Moreover, the results also support the finding that the distribution of teachers and class size also affect the quality of school education in both private and public schools, as argued by Steven et al. (2005).

The findings on the effectiveness of policy implementation in private and public schools made clear teachers are of the view that private schools are more likely to perform better. Oyibe and Van (2015) and Adam and Kafle (2013) discussed the fact that even though governments fund public schools, private schools perform far better when compared to public schools. The findings of this study also suggested that private schools have been providing a service to society. Although the government has been treating private schools as business firms, there exists a rule that private schools must be registered as a private company. Therefore, it is important for the government to think about implementing a different policy for private schools

in order to enhance the quality of education. The findings supported the teachers' claims that private schools were suffering from discriminatory behaviour, as students from public schools could only apply for a scholarship scheme after completing their secondary level education. Policies regarding head teachers and their roles and responsibilities have also been studied in this research.

The quantitative findings of this study showed that the majority of the respondents to the teacher survey strongly agreed with the statement that head teachers play a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance. In addition, some of them expressed their views through the open-ended question. The teacher survey, which was analysed by using the Mann-Whitney U Test in order to establish a ranking order, also revealed that private school teachers showed a significantly stronger level of agreement when compared to those from public schools. The findings indicate that teachers believe that leadership is the intermediary factor that triggers encouragement and enthusiasm.

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative study suggested that head teachers play a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance. In addition, they should possess leadership abilities and the government should implement a policy for providing more rights to head teachers for monitoring, rewarding and improving teachers in order to enhance students' academic performance. In this regard, Zhai (2018) explained the benefits of effective leadership in schools. Similarly, Pangen (2014), Koirala (2015) and Summers et al. (2017) argued in favour of giving more power to head teachers in order to maintain the quality of teaching, which is supported by this study.

Similarly, the findings showed that teachers were of the opinion that motivation, monitoring and evaluation systems for teachers are associated with students' academic performance. The majority of the respondents discussed the fact that there should be a strong monitoring system, especially for public schools, in order to improve teaching quality. Similarly, studies by National Education Policy (2009), Budathoki (2014) and Subedi (2015) mention that the modern education system and government policy on teachers' motivation contribute to better student performance. On the other hand, Rahman et al. (2011), Hinnant-Crawford (2016) and Ellison et al. (2018) argue that policies on learning theories are also responsible for the quality of teaching. This study found that there is less faith and trust in public schools. In addition, it found that government officials send their children to private schools, as they believe that private schools provide a better quality of education compared with public schools. The study

also suggested that a strong education policy should be implemented in order to encourage government officials to admit their children to public schools (Koirala, 2015). Therefore, this study puts forward a recommendation that issues should be addressed, as well as resolved, at policy level with the intention of boosting the academic performance of students (Fairhurst & Nembudani, 2014; Mintz & Kelly, 2018; Oyibe & Van, 2015).

The findings of this study also revealed that some of the head teachers from both private and public schools blamed the government for the fact that the poor monitoring and evaluation system for teaching and learning had resulted in poor education quality in Nepal. The respondents perceive that motivation played a significant role in speeding up the working capacity of teachers, improving the performance of teachers, augmenting the learning habits of teachers and likewise assisting in the development of a positive and competitive environment among teachers that helped to increase the academic achievements of students (Tuytens & Devos, 2009; Brown, 2001; Sezer, 2018; Peterson et al., 2017).

Furthermore, this study found that the proper implementation of government policies regarding the curriculum, exam and results system, monitoring and evaluation, the reward and punishment system and the role and responsibilities of head teachers could have a positive influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools. However, there were a couple of issues that head teachers of both private and public schools raised during the study. They felt that, such issues need to be addressed in order to enhance the quality of education. Furthermore, they insisted that schools should be provided with official (i.e., formal) information about these changes in good time. Teachers from private schools revealed that they had suggested to the government that discriminatory behaviours at policy level should be revised and that policies should be implemented differently in private schools to ensure better student performance. They also argued that uniformity in terms of textbooks would be helpful for quality control in both types of schools. Similarly, head teachers from public schools claimed that they had more power and authority to monitor and evaluate teachers' performance and activities. They also believed that a reward or punishment system could help to enhance students' performance by creating an effective teaching environment. However, every issue connected with government policy could not be dealt with in a single research project. Therefore, future research should be carried out to find out about other policy level factors, their importance and problems when it comes to improving the quality of education.

### **New findings**

The findings of this study explored teachers' perceptions about the discriminatory behaviour of the government, in terms of its different treatment of private and public schools. In future, there should not be different rules for either private or public schools. Participants from private schools suggested that there was the need for a separate policy or act for private schools.

## **6.6 Parental responsibilities and socio-economic factors**

ROB5 was investigated using the results from the qualitative findings (see Chapter 5). The findings support the fact that parental involvement, responsibilities and other socio-economic factors affect the quality of teaching and eventually influence students' academic performance. The findings are in alignment with socio-economic factors and find that family background, economic condition, current politics and culture have a significant influence on the academic performance of students. Likewise, parental responsibilities, such as parental support time, resource availability and the learning environment at home, have a significant correlation with the quality of education and students' performance.

The findings also suggested that there is no influence of culture on the quality of teaching and students' academic performance. This is because the Government of Nepal has ensured that no students and teachers can be discriminated against on the basis of their caste, culture, religion or language. Moreover, the findings not only supported the fact that parental responsibilities and socio-economic factors influence the quality of education. It was also found that a lack of parental responsibility, which was due to parents' lack of academic awareness and being busy at work, had an effect on the quality of education.

Similarly, it was found that the poor economic condition of parents and an unfavourable home environment affected learning activities because parents could not afford the essentials for their children's education. At the same time, the results showed strong support for the fact that children's good behaviour, the use of student-oriented teaching and responsible parents contribute towards creating a better learning environment. However, the results showed that students who do not obey teachers and are out of control, teachers who are not up-to-date and fail to understand the psychology of students and parents who lack awareness and are busy with their daily activities have a negative effect on students' performance.

The study found that parental responsibilities and socio-economic factors influence teaching and learning activities, which is in alignment with research by Goren and Yemini (2017) and



Hastings et al. (2015), who argued that in the case of students from lower economic backgrounds, parental assistance plays a vital role in enhancing these children's education. This study also supports the fact that teachers are a bridge between school and parents, and that this has an impact on the quality of students' education. This finding is also found in studies by September et al. (2016) and Veland et al. (2015). This study also found that family characteristics are a determining factor in terms of improvements in the quality of education. Similarly, the respondents indicated their belief that parents' roles, responsibilities and involvement in their children's education are associated with poor performance, which is also argued by Farooq et al. (2011) and Pangen (2014).

The research findings also support the fact that parents' level of involvement in primary classes is more frequent than their involvement in secondary school classes, which is in agreement with the studies of Norman (2016) and Puccioni (2015). Similarly, the findings of this research indicate that teachers feel that the involvement of parents, the family environment, parents' awareness of their children's educational activities and socio-economic factors can affect the quality of education. This is in alignment with the studies of Gore et al. (2017), Michubu (2013), Agarwhe (2013), Shaarawi (2009), Raychaudhuri et al. (2010), Parajuli and Das (2013) and Rahman et al. (2011).

The results also agree with literature which finds that poverty (Chen & Mensah, 2018; Bhatta, 2005) and high socio-economic status (September et al., 2016) have contrasting effects on learning; namely, parents with a higher economic status are more likely to be involved in supporting their children's learning activities than parents from a poor economic background. This is in contrast with a study conducted by Younger, et al. (1999), which found that there is an association between the father's education and income and students' academic performance.

System theory argues that political factors can influence the academic performance of students (Berner, 2013). This study found that politics has a negative effect on students' performance. Political interference is used to lobby the chairperson of the school management committee, who is responsible for making decisions about teacher recruitment, the budget and resource allocation in the school. As a result, the political person gets an appointment in the school and this may negatively affect its academic activities. This is in alignment with the literature produced by the Asian Human Rights Commission (2012) and The Education Journalist Group (2013).

Schools should be run independently of any political influences as a “peace zone area”, as was argued by the Education Journalist Group (2013). The findings of this study are in agreement with this and also the fact that schools should be independent of any political or violent activities. Social theory explains that the external environment is equally important for enhancing students’ performance (Berner, 2013). Witte (2015) found that parents should be able to provide all the essential learning materials and resources in order to raise the education level of their children.

Based on the evidence of this study, there are various factors interconnected with school education. This is because schools are the place where students learn new things while they are growing up and a better school environment helps them to do so effectively. Internal factors (i.e., in school) and the external environment (i.e., society) affect their learning activities within the social system (Norlin, 2009). A system theory viewpoint will permit a more profound acknowledgement of overall nature of society (McMahon & Patton, 2018). According to social system theory, schools are thought to be an open system. The most important component that differentiates an open system from a closed system is the alteration procedure (Abdu-Raheem, 2015). This is the procedure for converting raw resources into final products/outputs. With regard to the education sector, learners can be thought of as being the inputs and graduates can be considered as being the final output/products (Halperin, 2017; Tight, 2015). Thus, the system takes sources from their surroundings without interruption and then converts them as per the requirements of the environment (Bozkus, 2014).

Nowadays, policy has solved the issues associated with cultural factors (i.e., the caste system, language, culture and religion) and the government has focused on how to increase the education level of underprivileged and minority groups of citizens by offering various programmes and schemes, such as scholarships for higher education, free food in schools, etc. In this regard, Hollins (2011) and Scheerens (2015) stated that an understanding of the learners’ skills, knowledge and social, philosophical and cultural values are the most important factors by which to help students in their teaching and learning activities. Knowledge can be a powerful tool for influence students and allowing the teacher to teach them according to their social and cultural context, thus maintaining quality in education (Elder-Vass, 2015). However, the current author did not find that cultural contexts and social structure made any difference to students’ academic performance. Cultural factors can sometimes have an impact on the educational environment and, for that reason, they should be handled with proper care to create

comfort in the classroom (Zee et al., 2017). Based on the findings and other evidence, this study found that there was an absence of any association between the caste system (i.e., social group), language, religion or culture and students' academic performance.

### **6.7 Development of new system theory in Nepal with new findings**

System theory views the teaching method as being a cycle that revolves around input, processing and output. The input in the system considered in this study is teachers' professionalism, teaching methods, resources and facilities, the school environment, government policies and parental responsibilities. The process in the system in this study refers to effective pedagogy, teachers' personal development, the effective implementation of policies and the parental awareness programmes that help the students to achieve better performance and to be productive in society in the larger context.

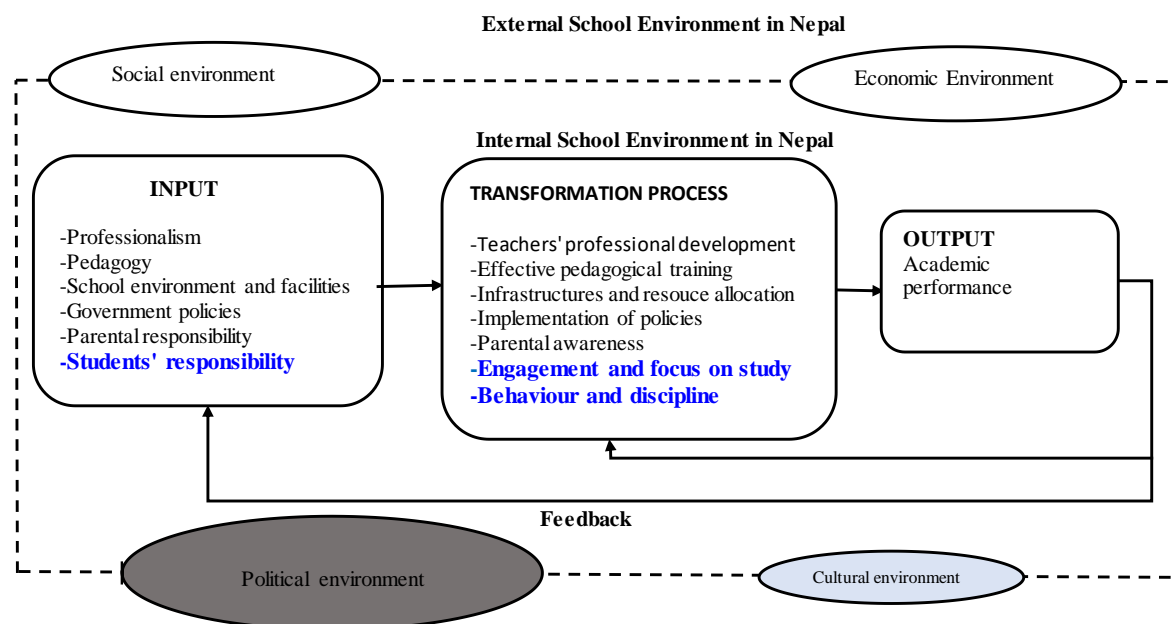
As argued in the conceptual model, teachers' professionalism, pedagogy, the school environment and parental awareness work as internal factors in the cycle of system theory in order to achieve better output in the form of academic achievement. Similarly, external factors, such as the economic, social, political and cultural environment, contribute to the cycle of the system, although the effectiveness of these factors varies. The findings agreed that the in-school environment and external environment (i.e., surrounding area) work as an input and an output in the process of knowledge transformation. This is also argued through social system theory, which here is applied in the context of Nepal.

There are some new findings that may contribute to the development of system theory in the contemporary context of Nepal. One of the major new findings is that student responsibility is an input in social system theory. In modern learner-based pedagogy, students contribute as much as teachers, parents, school management and other external factors. Students' classroom activities, motivation, discipline and participation in teaching and learning activities are strongly add to the quality of teaching, students' academic achievement and society in the wider landscape.

Likewise, this study discovers new findings on the political environment. As suggested in the literature, the political environment affects the quality of teaching and the current arguments are mostly about the positive influence of the political environment on the output. System theory and some extant literature emphasise the need for there to be an independent political

environment in schools, which this study supports. However, what this study finds is that external factors, such as the political environment, contribute towards the enhancement of the quality of education. The results of this study found a negative effect for the political environment, especially in cases where a country is politically unstable and there are political interventions in society because the society itself is politically divided. Hence, favouritism is common in various areas of the teaching and learning process. As a result, the political environment does not allow the school environment to function independently in the context of Nepal.

Figure 9: *System theory with new findings*



Author's representation of system theory

This study found that there is no influence of culture on the output of teaching activities. This is because of changes in the social environment and government policies; namely, there is zero

tolerance of discrimination on the basis of caste, culture, language and religion. The results also supported that there are no negative effects on teaching and learning activities.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 Conclusion**

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal. The study set major objectives in order to examine teachers' perceptions of a number of factors, i.e., teachers' professionalism, effective pedagogy and resources, the school environment and facilities, government policy and implementation, parental responsibilities and socio-cultural factors. In order to attain these objectives, a mixed method approach was adopted, which used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect primary data. The study was based in the Chitwan district, which is one of the most privileged districts in the central zone of Nepal. The convenience sampling technique was used to select the population in the study. In the present study, qualitative data was collected from 16 head teachers from both private and public secondary schools in the Chitwan district by using in-depth interview methods, while quantitative data was gathered from 332 teachers through the use of self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires, as well as the interview questions, were developed in line with the predefined objectives of the

study. Along with primary data, the researcher gathered secondary data to increase the validity and reliability of the whole study.

The findings of the study conclude, after examining the teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance, that there is a direct and positive relationship between teachers' professionalism and students' performance. Teachers who were highly qualified employed effective strategies when teaching students and adopted new and innovative practices by which to deliver information and knowledge, thus improving their quality of teaching. Similarly, highly experienced teachers also played a part in enhancing students' performance by providing appropriate guidance and knowledge. The qualitative study found that the majority of the public school teachers had received pedagogical training in comparison to private school teachers; however the respondents felt that the performance of private schools was better than that of public schools due to their robust management system and ability to effectively motivate their teachers. Hence, the feedback from teachers and head teachers makes it possible to conclude that despite the fact that there are well-trained teachers in public schools, these schools have not been able to motivate and manage their teachers in a positive way. As a result, the respondents felt that public schools have failed to attain the desired levels of performance.

In addition, it can also be concluded that the use of information and communications technology (ICT), teaching in the English language, class size, homework, feedback and extra activities, in addition to providing individual care and support, are related to effective teaching methods. The majority of the participants considered learner-centred pedagogy to be more effective when compared with the teacher-centred approach. In the learner-centred teaching method, the students are provided with an equal opportunity to express their ideas, communicate with each other, develop a better understanding and become involved in creative activities, which eventually boosts their performance. Similar responses were obtained from the in-depth interviews, in which head teachers argued that the equal participation of students in learning activities supports the enhancement of their academic performance. Likewise, teachers believe that the teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in influencing students' performance. If there is a positive relationship between teachers and students, then this helps in creating a favourable teaching and learning ambience, thus enabling a more interactive approach that will improve the academic performance of students. However, it has also been revealed that, in most cases, the respondents felt that it is very difficult to apply

student-centred pedagogy effectively in Nepalese schools as there is an insufficient number of teachers, large class sizes, an inefficient curriculum and poorly-developed technologies. The teachers surveyed stated that the student-centered approach is only more effective if teachers are provided with enough modern technologies for running audio-visual classes, but they felt that such resources are lacking in secondary schools in Nepal. Regarding this issue, head teachers talked about receiving inadequate support from the government regarding resources, facilities and technologies, which has been a major obstacle in the effective implementation of the student-centered teaching method.

It has also been established that quality education can be offered only if the school environment is favourable and there are adequate resources and facilities. To provide a quality education to students, schools require sufficient funds, adequate numbers of well-qualified teachers, course materials, an efficient school management committee, and so on. However, the availability of such resources has been a challenge in Nepal. The results of the qualitative study demonstrate that political activities and interference have been major issues when it comes to ensuring and enhancing the quality of school education. Similarly, teachers believe that students' performance is also affected by the discipline of both teachers and students. The respondents suggest that teachers should be disciplined themselves in order to encourage discipline in their students, and, for that, they need to have strong leadership qualities. Also, good teaching skills, prior preparation of the subject matter and higher professional support are required to direct students' attention towards teachers so that a quality education can be delivered.

As per the findings from both the questionnaires and interviews, it has been found that government policy and its implementation have a significant impact on students' academic performance. The government formulates educational plans and policies that include the reformation of the national curriculum, resource allocation, funding for the education sector, the formation of school management committees, examination procedures and the results system, the management of the teaching faculty, and so on. The interview results indicated that although head teachers are allowed to operate schools and to enhance education quality, they are not provided with the power and authority to improve teachers' professionalism. This issue is somewhat responsible for schools being unable to maintain a quality education system. Similar findings have been obtained from the quantitative study, which emphasises the important role played by head teachers in improving the academic performance of students. Head teachers need to possess strong leadership qualities and the government should grant

them more rights to regulate, monitor, reward and punish teachers in order to ensure the quality of education. In addition, the government should work in association with the different agencies and organisations that are working in the educational sector in order to develop effective educational policies within the country by which to bring about overall educational development.

Based on the findings and the examination of teachers' perceptions, it can be concluded that, in addition to the role played by teachers and head teachers, parental responsibility and other socio-economic aspects also play a significant role in promoting students' academic performance. The teacher-student-parent relationship, parental responsibility, parents' active participation in students' activities, family background and economic factors were found to play an influential role in creating a better teaching and learning environment that improves the quality of education. However, most parents of students attending public schools were found to be lacking in parental awareness and to be not very interested in the educational activities of their children. The head teachers interviewed admitted to feeling that their continual attempts to increase awareness among parents and guardians about the importance of children's learning activities at home were less effective than they would have liked. Likewise, the findings of this study present contrasting views among the respondents regarding the impact of cultural phenomena on students' performance. Almost all of the respondents stated that there is no relationship between cultural factors and teaching and learning activities, while a few respondents shared their previous experiences with regard to discriminatory attitudes towards students and teachers from a lower caste. However, the government has developed plans and policies by which to improve the educational status of minority and low-class citizens through various scholarship schemes, offering free food in schools, and so on.

The analysis of the literature suggests that there are no particular criteria by which to determine the quality of teaching, as the meaning of quality in terms of teaching differs from person to person and also by place and time. However, it is essential to identify the perceptions of teachers on teaching quality, since such quality is directly associated with the teachers. One of the most important factors by which to ascertain students' performance is the quality of teachers, which includes their knowledge about the subject matter, cognitive ability, teaching and learning knowledge and teaching performance in the classroom. In addition, there are some major components that enhance students' academic performance; namely, the curriculum, teaching and learning methods, creating a supportive environment, parental involvement and



awareness, flexibility, professionalism, and so on. However, after analysing the literature, it can be concluded that there are several factors that are responsible for the poor academic performance of students in Nepal, and the poor performance of public school students in particular. Such factors are the centralised curriculum, teacher-centred teaching and learning techniques, the absence of dedication in teachers, poorly developed infrastructures and inadequate resources and materials, etc. All these factors prevent schools from providing a quality education, which results in poor performance. Therefore, these issues need to be addressed as soon as possible in order to increase the educational status of schools in Nepal.

Thanks to the responses gathered from teachers and head teachers on the issue of teaching quality, this study supports the fact that professionalism, pedagogy, the school environment and facilities, government policies, parental responsibility and socio-economic factors are major contributing factors for the quality of teaching and, in turn, better student performance. In addition to this, the respondents mentioned that there are other factors, such as students' responsibility, parental awareness programmes, 24/7 power supply, extra English language classes, politically unbiased school management and more administrative power for head teachers, that enhance the quality of teaching. This is suggestive of the fact that both the internal and external environment affects the output of the education system, as is argued by social system theory (see Chapter 2). However, teachers perceived that there is an additional factor, namely, students' responsibility that plays an important role in addition to the other five inputs (i.e., professionalism, pedagogy, government policy, school environment and parental responsibilities) in achieving the outputs examined in this study. The findings are also suggestive of the fact that the external environment, and politics and socio-economic conditions in particular, are major factors that affect the process of transforming the quality of education. Hence, this study empirically tests social system theory and adds to knowledge on its input, processes and output in the context of school education in Nepal.

## **7.2 The original contribution of this thesis**

Social system theory has been tested in various contexts around the world and the impact and implications of both external and internal environments have been examined in various contexts over the years. The extant literature on social system theory indicates the importance of external factors, such as the political, cultural, social and economic environment, and states that these have a broadly similar influence on academic performance. However, this research on teachers' perceptions of teaching quality and its impact on students' academic performance

found that political influence was considered to have a significant effect upon teaching and learning environment. In addition, this research identified new components within the internal environment of social system theory, such as student responsibilities, behaviour and discipline, in the context of Nepal. This new knowledge can contribute to the context specific nature of social system theory.

The present study is focused on analysing teachers' perceptions of quality teaching and its impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nepal. With the help of existing literature, this study has both explored existing knowledge and expanded it. Comparatively speaking, the findings of this study are different and original. The findings that are detailed below represent the original contribution of this thesis, because these findings were not revealed in past studies.

### **7.2.1 Political encroachment**

The findings suggest that political encroachment is the issue that affects schools and their environment more serious than issues studied. The findings clearly indicate that political parties exercise excessive power for their political gain within the school environment, which has a negative impact on the school system. This new knowledge contributes to existing social system theory in the context of developing countries like Nepal. Hence, this research suggests that the political environment can be included one of the most influential factors in the system theory in the context of Nepal.

### **7.2.2 Teachers' accountability**

This research contributes to the internal components of social system theory by identifying that teachers' accountability is one of the important elements when it comes to the quality of teaching. When it comes to the professional characteristics of teachers, the lack of a supervising system for teachers was found to be a severe issue hampering the provision of quality teaching. Different reasons were found to explain the poor accountability of teachers, among which the political affiliation of the teacher and their excessive participation in political activities were a major issue. The poor accountability of teachers was also the cause of the unfavourable school environment. Due to the fact that an educational institution can be considered as being a social system in accordance with social system theory, teachers have a responsibility to make the education system effective. However, if they are not aware of their responsibilities then there

may be challenges, such as a low quality of education and conflict within the institution, while some teachers might use the education system for their personal benefit. Hence, this finding contributes new knowledge to the application of social system theory to the educational setting.

### **7.2.3 Ineffective monitoring system**

The findings of this research suggest, in relation to the existing and ineffective monitoring system, that the government should implement an effective monitoring system by offering rewards and punishments in order to improve the quality of school education. Teachers, who devote their time to improving students' output and maintaining teaching quality, as well as the favourable environment of the school, should be rewarded. Similarly, there should be a system of encouragement by which to improve the performance of teachers who are responsible for a poor quality of education. Moreover, monitoring should also be done for students and students should be rewarded and motivated in order to foster a proper environment for learning. Hence, an effective and fair monitoring system could help to improve the performance of teachers and students, as well as to help in maintaining the quality of teaching. This new knowledge could be helpful in improving current practice, in addition to contributing to social system theory in the field of improving the quality of education.

### **7.2.4 Lack of head teachers' involvement in the process of policy making**

This study suggests the involvement of head teacher in the policy-making process of school education. Policies could be effectively implemented thanks to the involvement of head teachers, who could contribute by sharing their views and ideas about the problems that exist in the school environment. Social system theory provides a good framework for collectively making decisions in the policymaking process. Head teachers are the ones who actually interact with both teaching staff and students, aware of their requirements. Therefore, this research contributes to existing knowledge by restating the importance of the active involvement of head teachers in the policy making process.

### **7.2.5 The gap between knowledge from training and practice**

Social system theory focuses on the importance of knowledge transfer among different groups in the internal social environment. This research suggests that students perform well academically if they are provided with theoretical and practical skills, as well opportunities to

implement their theoretical knowledge. However, it has been found that students are not given the chance to use their theoretical knowledge in practice. The gap between the knowledge gained from training and practice and its implementation in classrooms can have an impact on the performance of students; therefore, teachers need to be provided with a system for practically implementing theoretical knowledge as quickly as possible. Teachers should be provided with training, which may help them to assist the students in using their theoretical knowledge in their personal lives. Hence, this study contributes to knowledge by focusing on the implementation of the knowledge acquired through training in classroom situations.

#### **7.2.6 Students' responsibilities**

Teachers believed in this research that the responsibility of students is a major contributing factor that found as a new knowledge in the internal environment of social system theory. This study suggests, thanks to the qualitative findings, that students can also play an important role in improving their performance. Their focus on study, maintenance of discipline, the manner in which they attend classes, the timetable they follow, completion of homework on time, etc., can contribute both to the quality of teaching and their performance. Unlike in the traditional education system, the modern education system is focused on learner-centred teaching, which is something that this study also supports. Hence, the student has various responsibilities, which should be followed by them in order to exert a positive influence on the education system.

#### **7.3 Strengths of the study**

In order to collect the primary data, face-to-face in-depth interviews and the survey questionnaire method were used. The mixed method approach, which involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, can be considered as a major strength of this study.

- ❖ In-depth interviews are flexible and they have the power to reveal the problem in relation to reality, in terms of the experiences of the participants (Saunders et al., 2015). In face-to-face interviews, the interviewer can query unclear answers to questions if they are not satisfied with the answer. Since the respondents are not limited to choosing answers, the interviewer also has the ability to get to the root of the problem.
- ❖ Similarly, by using a survey questionnaire, the generalisability of the findings can be obtained through the use of a large sample size. The use of statistical tools has made

analysis faster and easier to carry out (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Similarly, in this thesis, the Mann-Whitney U Test was used in SPSS, which simplified the analysis.

- ❖ The present study applied the mixed method approach, which uses both qualitative as well as quantitative data for the interviews and surveys. The use of face-to-face interviews with head teachers and a questionnaire survey with teachers in this thesis gave strength to the study and provided the interviewer with the opportunity to compare head teachers' and teachers' experiences. An additional strength of this study is the area studied: teachers were selected from both urban and rural areas who represented both private and public schools.
- ❖ The researcher used open-ended questions to explore the respondents' perceptions of the factors that affect the quality of education, which gave him the chance to explore respondents' views on the topic in flexible ways. If two respondents were found to have a different perspective on a question, these were reported on, and analysed, in depth (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Hence, due to the investigative nature of this method, the researcher had the flexibility to go deep in order to find out the fundamental reasons for the low quality of the teaching system. With the help of the quantitative survey, different factors that have an impact on the educational performance of students were understood in a fair way and this also helped the respondents to express their thoughts and ideas on the issues about the teaching system that were raised.
- ❖ In this study, the data was collected methodically. Nvivo was used to analyse the data collected through the face-to-face interviews and, similarly, SPSS was used for the analysis of the survey findings. Hence, the research approach and analysis were done step-by-step in order to extract the conclusions, which was a major strength of this study.

#### **7.4 The limitations of this study**

Every study has its strengths and weakness. Similarly, this study has strengths, in terms of its methods, as well as limitations. One drawback to the use of qualitative interviews is that they cannot cover a large sample size and that the data is poor in terms of its generalisability (Dawson, 2013). To manage respondent bias, the researcher should use triangulation.

Respondents in a qualitative interview may give voice to issues that contradict each other based on their social context, unique experiences and thoughts. Only a limited number of respondents can be interviewed using qualitative interviews, but sometimes interviewing the number of respondents may take longer than the expected time. Hence, the task of transcribing and translating, along with carrying out the analysis, can take a longer time than expected.

- ❖ The basic drawback faced during the present study was that people were still in the phase of recovering from the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. In addition, one district was chosen for the collection of data. However, large numbers of teachers and head teachers from the selected district participated in both the qualitative and quantitative study. It is believed that a higher level of validity and generalisation could have been achieved if the researcher was provided with the opportunity and time to collect data from a higher number of respondents in various geographical areas.
- ❖ This study aimed to have equal participation from males and females; however, this was impossible because of the limited time that the researcher had to complete the study. This was another drawback.
- ❖ As a result of the limited time and resources available, this research only focuses on teachers' perspectives. However, future research could include various stakeholders, such as policy makers, students and parents, in order to establish a direct causal link between the factors that affect students' academic performance.
- ❖ The respondents argued about the requirement for there to be an equitable government strategy for both public and private schools. However, in this study, strategy makers were not included due to time limitations and only teachers' perceptions were covered. Hence, the data would be more generalisable if the policy makers and curriculum developers were involved as respondents and could give their views on the issue.
- ❖ In this study, the researcher chose schools randomly because district education officials did not provide updated information about individual schools. There could have been more validation of the data and greater generalisability of the findings if the district office had provided the updated and most recent information about schools.

## **7.5 Practical implications**

This research was carried out not only with the intention of finding out the perceptions of teachers regarding teaching quality and its effect on students' academic performance, but also to explore the practical consequences of the findings. The implications of this study are presented below.

### **7.5.1 Implications for policymakers**

The findings of the study have significant implications for future policymakers in terms of improving the quality of teaching, as this study identified various factors and problems that affect the quality of teaching in Nepal. Public schools are lacking in resources, motivated teachers and proper policy and practice. The lack of proper coordination between policymakers and practitioners is the primary reason for underfunding and the lack of resources, including teachers, staff, infrastructures and teaching and learning materials, in schools.

With reference to the generalised findings of the study, it concludes that in order to improve the overall environment of schools and to enhance the educational performance of students, future policymakers should take the following things into consideration.

- ❖ Policies need to comprise proper strategic plans for the training and monitoring of teachers, which would be helpful if implemented in classrooms. Teachers will be ready to accept the changes brought in by policymakers if they are provided with training that helps them to learn about new methods of teaching. This could make the aims and targets of policymakers clearer to teachers.
- ❖ In order to equip public schools with a healthy infrastructure and a sufficient number of teachers, the government should cooperate at the local level in order to understand schools' requirements. Therefore, this guideline must be included in the policy of education. The head teachers of schools could also be given more power to control and solve these issues in order to improve the quality of teaching and to enhance students' academic performance.

- ❖ Policymakers need to effectively evaluate the policy of providing scholarships to needy students, as scholarships are not provided in private schools. A different policy should be introduced for private schools, such as a Private Schools Act. Similarly, the policymakers should form an effective monitoring mechanism in order to improve the quality of education.
- ❖ Low-performing students in schools were found often be left out and ignored. In order to encourage such students, policymakers should pay attention to supporting and motivating low-performing students. Similarly, policymakers should focus on the economic background of students so that they can provide them with opportunities to learn the vocational skills that could help them to survive, based on their abilities, after they graduate from school. This would act as a motivation for both parents and students.
- ❖ Lastly, an effective monitoring system for schools is the primary guideline that the policymakers could focus on. A system of reward and punishment works as a motivational factor for teachers as well as schools, as the best teachers and schools are rewarded and the low performing teachers and schools are punished. Punishment provides an opportunity for improving performance.

### **7.5.2 Implications for teachers and practitioners**

Educational practitioners play a vital role in implementing government policy and guidelines. The role of the educational practitioner is not only to achieve the learning results, but also to encourage parents to assist their children in enhancing their academic performance. Due to the fact that the practitioner plays a vital role, they must work hard and be full of dedication and commitment. The implications for practitioners and parents, according to the findings of this study, are given below.

- ❖ The teaching technique and teaching materials, as well as the quality of education, play a vital role in enhancing the teaching system, so school head teachers have to review these regularly. Analysing the learning outcomes that the class has achieved should be the principal course of action.



- ❖ During a different research project, a question was raised about the professionalism of teachers. Therefore, teachers that are selected to work in a school should be committed to be honest in their profession, which should be ensured by the head teacher of the school. Teachers should not express their own political beliefs when they are in school, as this could affect the learning outcomes of students.
- ❖ A review system needs to be adopted by the district education office to ensure the accountability of the head teacher, teachers and trainers.
- ❖ The involvement of parents in the educational system is essential and practitioners should work with a proper plan for ensuring parental involvement. Schools should not only focus on daily communication; they should work on managing an awareness program with parents, as this could help to improve education levels within the school.
- ❖ The socio-economic factors that affect the education system on the parents' side have been well presented in the findings. Since education is a must in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, parents should focus on creating a learning environment at home so that children can complete their homework. Similarly, regular communication and cooperation with teachers by the parents is also essential.

### **7.5.3 Implications for future researchers**

Several findings regarding the impact of the education system on improving the quality of teaching, as well as its effects on the academic performance of students, have been found. The following are the valuable implications for future researchers.

- ❖ Since the data for this study was only collected from secondary schools in the Chitwan district, future researchers who are going to work on the parameters of the quality of the teaching system and their respective impact on the educational performance of students should collect data from different geographical regions. By varying the location, researchers will have the opportunity to compare the findings.

- ❖ The data that was collected in this study was based only on secondary schools. Future researchers could focus on both primary as well as secondary schools, which would provide them with an opportunity to compare the data relating to these two different types of schools.
- ❖ This study scratches the surface when it comes to the issue of political influence in relation to the quality of teaching. However, to explore the more detailed correlation between teaching quality and political influence, researchers could investigate this issue in future.
- ❖ Given the fact that this study aims to deal with the perceptions of teachers regarding the quality of the education system, future researchers could also examine the perceptions of policymakers and developers in relation to the quality of the education and examine their overall impact.
- ❖ The findings of this study have explored the general perceptions of teachers regarding the education system and students' performance; however, future research could explore more realistic outcomes if private and public schools were analysed separately.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Survey Questionnaire

“Teachers’ Perceptions of Teaching Quality and its Impacts on Students’ Performance in Secondary Schools in Nepal”

Demographic Status (□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□):

$$\left( \begin{array}{cccccccccccccccc} \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square \end{array} / \begin{array}{ccccccc} \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square & \square \end{array} \right)$$

10

$$(\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square)$$

25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55 and 55 plus

$$(\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square)$$

Male (□□□□□)	Female (□□□□□)	Other (□□□□)

Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	PhD/other

(

)

1 - 5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	21-25 Years	25 Yrs. plus

[illegible]

Permanent (□□□□□)	Non-permanent (□□□□□□)	Other (□□□□)

$$(\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$$
  

$$\square\square\square\square\square\square)$$

Trained (□□□□□□□□□□)	Untrained (□□□□□□□□□□)	Other (□□□□)

Please read the statements and tick one of them from the alternate option given below:

[illegible]

STATEMENTS (□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □):

A.	Quality of Teacher (□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ )  (Qualification/Experience/ Training)  (□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ / □□□□□□ / □□□□□ )	Strongly Agree  (□□□□ □□□□)	Agree (□□□ □)	Neither Agree nor Disagree  (□□□□ □□□)	Disagree (□□□□ □)	Strongly Disagree  (□□□□ □□□□□)
1.	Teaching quality does not depend on teachers' academic qualifications.					

[illegible]

		( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Teachers' personalities, attitudes, and behaviours encourage students to pay attention in the classroom.  ( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> , <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> )					
6.	Teachers' personal teaching skill and strategy does not make any difference in encouraging students in classroom activities.  ( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> )					
7.	A good student-teacher relationship is not important to enhancing students' performance.  ( <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> )					
8	Students can show better performance in class when they get individual support from the teacher.					



	(□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□)					
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C.	Policy and implementation (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□)	Strongly Agree (□□□□□ □□□)	Agree (□□□ □)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (□□□□ □□□)	Disagree (□□□□ □)	Strongly Disagree (□□□□□ □□□□)
9.	Quality education depends upon educational policies and their proper implementation.  (□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□)					
10.	Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of teachers are not essential to maintain the quality of the education.  (□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□, □□□□□ □ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□)					
11.	The Head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance.  (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□)					
12.	Quality education is not dependent on curricular and pedagogical strategy.					

	(□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□)					
D.	Teaching and learning method: (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□)	Strongly Agree (□□□□ □□□□)	Agree (□□□ □)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (□□□□ □□□)	Disagree (□□□□ □)	Strongly Disagree (□□□□ □□□□□)
13.	Teacher-centred pedagogy enhances students' performance compared to student-centred teaching.  (□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□ □□□□□ )					
14.	Creative activities in classroom encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding  (□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□)					
15.	Teaching and learning is effective, if a teacher provides equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge.  (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□)					

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16.	<p>A group discussion and presentation in a classroom enhances students' understanding and helps in creating new ideas and concepts.</p> <p>(□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□□)</p>					
E.	<p>Planning and preparation:</p> <p>(□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□)</p>	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>(□□□□ □□□□)</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>(□□□□ □)</p>	<p>Neither Agree nor Disagree</p> <p>(□□□□ □□□□)</p>	<p>Disagree</p> <p>(□□□□ □)</p>	<p>Strongly Disagree</p> <p>(□□□□ □□□□□)</p>
17.	<p>Preparation by the teacher (before class) helps him/her in teaching with a clearer vision.</p> <p>(□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□)</p>					
18.	<p>Subject matter knowledge would not help for the better performance.</p>					

	(□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□)					
19.	Lesson planning does not aid better student performance.  (□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□)					
20.	Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more.  (□□□□□□□□ □ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□)					

Please share more information for additional support to my study if you want:

(□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□ □ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□  
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Thank you

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview Schedule**

Good Morning/ Afternoon/ Evening!!

My name is Shiva Tiwari, a PhD student from University of Abertay, Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom. I am going to conduct an interview about the current educational scenario, quality of education, school environment and facilities, motivation for teachers and students, teachers training and experience, policy planning and implementation, progress and result, opportunities and challenges

#### **Interview Schedule:**

1. Could you kindly tell me the key aspects about your job as the principal of School?
2. How would you judge the performance of your school over the last few years? (Could

you kindly provide me the position and result for last few years?)

3. What do you consider as the key factors that affect students' academic performance in your school? (Academic qualification, experience, training, age, gender etc.)
4. Did you make any changes when you first came to this school to strengthen academic programme? What were they? What's the impact of these changes? What is your focus for this year?
5. From your perspective, what does quality teaching include? (Could you explain more)
6. Based on your experience, how can the quality of teaching at secondary School be improved to enhance students' performance?
7. Other than teaching, what other services would you consider to be necessary to improve students' academic performance?
8. What qualities do you think effective teachers have? And what role do you think teachers play in student learning?
9. Do you believe that teachers' character, attitude and personality could enhance students' performance? In what ways?
10. What are the main problems and challenges in this sector in current scenario? How are you facing/dealing to solve them?
11. How do you define current political situation in terms of educational progress? Do you think that politics and political situation has an effect to the students' performance? If so, could you explain the ways?
12. Do you think, there is any relationship between the culture/religion and quality of education? Please explain more.

Thank you!!

I appreciate the time spent with me for this interview. It would be helpful for me, if you think there is anything else to know which I can include in my research. I should have all information that I need. So, would it be all right to call you, if I need further information and updates?

Thank you again for your kind support, help and cooperation.



### **Appendix 3**

#### **Request Letter to Head Teacher**

Date:.../...../.....

Dear Head Teacher

,.....School.

Subject: Request for conducting research in the School.

Dear head teacher,

I am a PhD student at the University of Abertay, School of Social and Health Science, Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom. I am doing a research project entitled on the topic of “Teachers’ Perception of Teaching Quality and its Impact on Students’ Performance in Secondary Schools in Nepal” *Under the supervision of Dr. Jim Moir and Ms. Andrea Cameron.* Through this letter, I would like to request you to give the permission to conduct the research in your school. Similarly, I would like to request you to take part in this research as an interviewee. The following ethical issues will be considered.

The school or teacher/ head teacher will not be forced to participate.

The schools’ identities will be concealed.

If school wishes, the research report will be provided to the school.

You or any teacher may choose not to participate and may withdraw consent to participate at any time.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Shiva Ram Tiwari

PhD Student, University of Abertay

## **Appendix 4**

### **Request Letter for Ethical Approval**

Date: ...../...../2014

To

The Director

Department of Education

The Government of Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepal

Subject: Request for the ethical consent

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby would like to request to provide me the authority and consent to conduct my research titled 'Teachers' Perception of Teaching Quality and it Impact on Students' Performance in Public Secondary School in Nepal' in which the participants/respondents will be the school teachers, head teachers policy makers and educationist who are under your office. The research is solely for my PhD degree and the information collected will not be disseminated anywhere else without prior consent of the participants and will remain confidential. The findings of the research can be shared with you for necessary recommendation. I hope that the findings will contribute towards improving policies and plans.

I will be thankful to you for providing me with consent for the purpose.

Thanking for your kind cooperation.

Sincerely yours,


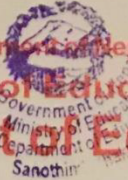
Shiva Ram Tiwari

PhD Student

University of Abertay, Dundee, United Kingdom

## Appendix 5

### Ethical Approval from DOE Nepal

   
Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Education  
Department of Education

Ref. No.:- 02

Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

15 oct 2014

**Subject –Ethical consent for research**

**To Whom It May Concern**


I am pleased to inform you that Mr Shiva Ram Tiwari is undertaking a research project intitled "Major factors affecting student's performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nepal" as a part of his PHD programme in education. For the same, he requires the collection and analysis if authentic data.

In response to the application submitted by Mr Tiwari requesting for ethical consent for collecting required data, has no objection to the collection of requested data.

I recommend Mr Tiwari to you and would be grateful if you could give him your full co-opration in his research work.

Should you have any queries regarding this , please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Deputy director

Phone: 6634178, 6634179, 6634180, 3361075, 6631971, 6631974, 6633625, 6633028, Fax: 6631972, 6631973, 6633625  
Website: www.doe.gov.np, e-mail: doestat@mos.com.np, doedg@mos.com.np

## Appendix 6

### Ethical Approval from DOE Nepal

Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Education  
Department of Education  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE**  
Bharatpur, Chitwan

Tel. : 056-520151

Ref. No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : 10 Oct 2014

**Subject :**

Subject : ETHICAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH  
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

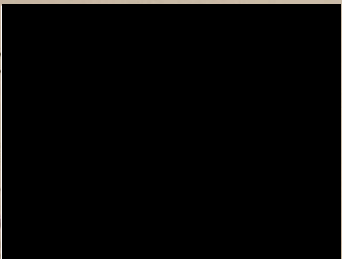
I am pleased to inform you that Mr Shiva Ram Tiwari is undertaking a research project entitled "Major Factors affecting Students' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nepal" as a part of his PhD programme. For the same, he requires the collection and analysis of authentic data.

In response to the application submitted by Mr Tiwari requesting for ethical consent for collecting required data, District Education Office, Chitwan has no objection to the collection of requested data.

I recommend Mr Tiwari to you and would be grateful if you could give him your full co-operation in his research work.

Should you have any query regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Asst. Dir.

## Appendix 7

### Participant Consent Form

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Shiva Ram Tiwari, a PhD student of Social and Health Science from University of Abertay Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom.

As part of the requirement of the PhD programme, I am going to undertake a research related to school education in Nepal. My research topic is 'Major Factors Affecting Students' Performance in Public Secondary School in Nepal'. I will be grateful if you would spend a few moments of your time to respond to my questionnaire to enable me complete my study.

Please be assured that this will be used for academic purposes only and the necessary confidentiality will be adhered to. I would like to inform you that you are free to withdraw your consent for this study at any time.

Please tick to the appropriate box below.

☐

I agree to participate in the research study.

☐

I do not agree to participate in the research study.

Name:-----

Signed:-----

Date:-----

## Appendix 8

### Piloting questionnaire

#### “Major Factors Affecting Students’ Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nepal”

##### Questionnaires:

Name of school/ Location: -----

Qualification: -----

Age/Sex: -----

Working experience: -----year(s)

Permanent		Temporary		Other	
-----------	--	-----------	--	-------	--

Appointment status:

Date: -----/-----/-----

STATEMENTS:		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A.	Quality of Teacher					
1.	Teaching quality depends on teachers’ academic qualification.					
2.	Training and refreshment for teachers makes them more effective in the classroom.					
3.	Teachers with more experience will have more					

	knowledge of effective teaching practice					
4.	Personal teaching skill and strategy encourages students to take part in classroom activities.					
5.	Teachers' personalities, attitudes, and behaviours encourage students to pay attention in the classroom.					
6.	Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of teachers are essential to maintain the quality of the education.					
7.	Quality education is depends upon government level policy and its proper implementation.					
8.	The Head teacher plays a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance.					
<b>B.</b>	<b>Teaching and learning method:</b>					
1.	I focus on learner centred pedagogy rather than on teaching.					
2.	I apply creative activities to get students excited about learning.					
3.	Cooperative learning method is effective among students because they will have equal opportunity to learn (literature review).					
4.	I provide opportunities for students to communicating with each other and share their ideas and knowledge.					
5.	A group discussion and presentation enhances students' understanding and helps to create new ideas, concepts etc. (literature review).					

6.	I allow students to begin homework/ group work in class with peer assistance.					
<b>C.</b>	<b>Teacher student relationship:</b>					
1.	The student teacher relationship is important to enhance students' performance.					
2.	Students get better grades in classes where students get individual support from the teacher.					
3.	Teachers can care students' activities, if there is good relation between them					
4.	When teacher and student have a good relationship, then they enjoy school more.					
5.	In a small class, (less than 40 students in a class room) there is close relationship between teacher and students.					
<b>D.</b>	<b>Planning and preparation:</b>					
1.	Quality education depends upon curriculum and pedagogical strategy.					
2.	The course schedule helps the teaching and learning process.					
3.	Preparation by the teacher (before class) helps to teach with clearer vision					
4.	Homework and feedback encourages students to learn more.					
6.	Additional time to students helps them for better performance.					
<b>E.</b>	<b>School environment and facilities:</b>					
1.	The enabling classroom environment and facilities					



	promotes students' interest about teaching and learning.					
2.	Technology can help improve teachers' performance to deliver classroom sessions.					
3.	Small class size (not more than 40 students in a classroom) can be more interactive to boost up students' performance.					
4.	Student and teacher both feel comfortable in small class size for teaching and learning.					
5.	I found it easy to control a small class.					
6.	The availability of Library facilities and learning material are essential for active learning.					
7.	I find a large class helpful because students get the opportunity to interact with a large number of others.					
8.	Political stability ensures that schools run smoothly, and this creates a better environment to focus on teaching and learning.					
9.	Political interference can have a negative impact on the quality of education.					
10.	An attractive salary encourages teachers to provide a better performance that can enhance students' achievement.					

## Appendix 9

### Ethical Approval Form of University



**SHIVA TIWARI**

Matriculation number: 1307497

Programme: Postgraduate Research (SHS), year 12

Project Title: **Teachers' perception of teaching quality and its impact on students' performance in secondary schools in Nepal**

Project Reference Number: SHS\_R\_2014-15\_33

Supervisor: JM & AC

Dear Shiva

You have been granted Full Ethical Approval for the above project.

Standard Conditions:

- i You must remain in regular contact with your project supervisor.
- ii Your supervisor must see a copy of all materials and your procedure prior to commencing data collection.
- iii If you make any substantive changes to your proposed project, you must submit a new ethical approval application to the Committee. Application forms and the accompanying explanatory document are on the Intranet. Completed forms should be resubmitted through the Research Ethics Blackboard course.
- iv Any changes to the agreed procedures must be negotiated with your supervisor.

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in your ethical approval being revoked by the Ethics Committee.

Should you have any queries please contact your Supervisor.

**Research Ethics Committee**

**School of Social & Health Sciences**

## Data Coding Sample

